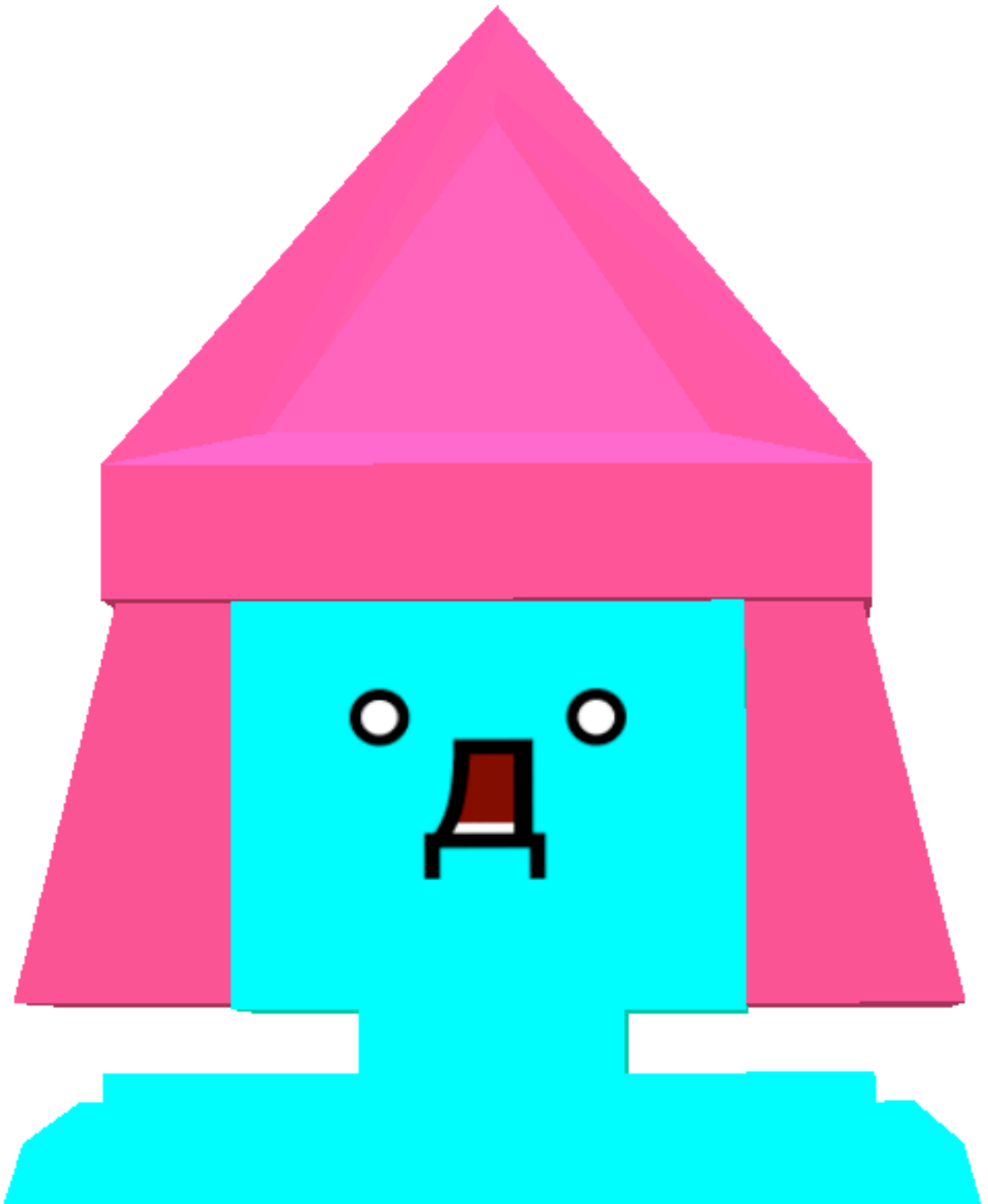
IcyGamma

Biography of an eventer.



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Introduction

I was asked to write this by IcyGamma. At first I thought he was taking the piss so I asked him why, and he said that he wanted to have his own 'Blockland story' or 'book' about what he did, like some other players have recently been doing. He told me he wanted it to be like a biography. In particular, he referenced Steve Job's recent book that he explained he had read. He said that a lot of his in-game inspiration for Blockland event computers was drawn from Apple. Even his last build looked unashamedly like the iMac G3 released by Apple in 1998 or so. He said, much like Job's book, he wanted it to be similar in that he didn't want to stop me from writing it my way and posting negative information. In saying that he did send me a tonne of links and snippets over email, some of which I lightly skimmed over due to them being too big. But for the most part I feel I did a good job by myself.

His reference to Steve Jobs perhaps vindicated the feeling that IcyGamma had an ego bigger than Blockland itself. It also reflected another aspect about him; his strange desire to build or create mock-realistic services, builds, and tools. Its as if Blockland was another reality for him. Another world to hide away in.

When I asked IcyGamma what he meant by the whole 'Steve Jobs book' deal, he said to me “I want a mock-book with the same vibes of his biography. In the world of Blockland, I think I may be fitting for someone who makes an interesting read.”

Someone asked me, why did you write this anyway? Privately, I like IcyGamma. I don't agree with how he acts (sorry Icy haha) but I was a fan of his videos and his builds. When I was asked to help I felt honored (but I kinda expected it due to being somewhat close to him for a while). However I feel I should remain anonymous to the wider community, as after having read about IcyGamma and seem some recent topics about him I now realize a lot of people hold contempt for what he did. And I don't want to be dragged into it. To those of you who overheard me and IcyGamma on servers or know who I am, please have some respect for me and don't blurt it out.

IcyGamma and I spoke for pretty much all of November during 2011. Through email, on Skype, and over Steam. Even sometimes we had voice chats, though IcyGamma regularly shied out of them. At one point he got a cold and demanded I leave him alone, then later apologized and spammed my inbox with “<3 <3 <3 luv joo”. But over time, through both talking to him, being sent information, and conducting my own research, I actually had real fun doing this. So without further ramblings, I welcome fans and haters to the Blockland life of IcyGamma...

Chapter 1
The 'Birth' of 4127

IcyGamma came into Blockland during 2008 in the memorable era of version 8. Having recently purchased a late 2007 white MacBook, he was populating it with software. About a year prior to purchasing the game, he had downloaded Blockland expecting a more typical editor interface (perhaps like that of Roblox) and couldn't figure out how to use it. Frustrated at the game and failing to understand how it worked, he angrily uninstalled it and forgot about it.

“I nearly missed Blockland entirely. Had I not decided to have another crack at finding a construction game, I would have probably never ended up in Blockland at all. And even then, I almost joined Roblox instead.” IcyGamma said.

After finding Blockland again and liking it during early 2008, he was faced with a grueling choice. He had also come across Roblox in his search and wasn't sure which way to go. He explained to me how his step brother was visiting from England and he sat down and spoke to him, comparing the two games and asking for opinion. He decided to go with Roblox.

“I was attracted by the physics. It was cool, I wanted to blow towers up. The Roblox interface was so much easier anyway.”

IcyGamma would not end up buying Roblox. He soon realized that playing it on a Mac was not practical, and even booting into Windows (using a dual boot, it was an Intel model) to play it was a slow and uncomfortable experience. Furthermore he didn't like the pricing of the game and rendered it a useless move.

Without a credit card, he had the job of then convincing his father to purchase Blockland after deciding it would still be a great game to play. It would end up taking a week to get his father to make what was his first online purchase ever, but IcyGamma would get his key. He would be one of the earlier 4k generation, possessing the ID of 4127.

Before the key was purchased and during the week that lead to it, IcyGamma spent much of his time playing the demo version.

“My first build was this little house on a 16x16 plate. It was a pastel orange building with a maroon roof if I recall. And it had little brick windows at the back, and a little door. It was small and strangely made, but in hindsight pretty damn cute compared to most peoples first builds.” IcyGamma explained. This immediate ability to create good shapes and use good colors would not be wasted on his future builds. Though IcyGamma quickly learned larger builds were not his forte.

“My large builds were gross. Always too empty, too weird, too ugly. I got better in time, but I couldn't blow things up into scale. I crafted small builds, I didn't construct large sky

scrapers or huge builds on an industrial level. It bores me.” he admitted.

By the time IcyGamma received his key, he jumped online in excitement and opened the, game. He wasn't aware of how things worked, admitting he wasn't sure if players moderated the entire game or just single servers.

In version 8, ID discrimination was rampant. But IcyGamma was an exception. He avoided abuse almost entirely. He fondly spoke about his first server ever.

“It was a freebuild. Two users were there. They were AFK and weren't talking to me, I took it personally. Its ridiculous, I know. But I went to a lot of servers and quickly figured out how things worked.”

Much of IcyGamma's time in Blockland was quiet and uneventful. But this was soon to change. For IcyGamma had lots of ideas and often tried to influence people with them.

Chapter 2
The Gamma Ghost

IcyGamma hadn't been in Blockland long before he started sharing his ideas. During a fire fighter server using Zor's classic firemod on Bedroom Dark, IcyGamma decided to take over the minigame after becoming disinterested with what was going on. The administrator didn't seem to mind.

He rounded up a couple of players and took them to the side of the map, while others were putting out fires in a customized version of beta city. He devised a simple game where he would hide in the dark, making random appearances around builds, as players had to find him and catch him with the water gun. Soon the entire server was running around, chasing him and two other players being ghosts. It was dubbed “Catch Gamma Ghost”. The players acting as the ghosts had to frequently run past strobe lights too as a rule, leading to the 'ghost hunters' building light traps to attract them.

“It was one of those moments in Blockland that you never forget. Where a freak idea and a bunch of fun-loving people suddenly do something really fun in the game, and you just know that its a one-off and you have to make the most of it. The right people at the right place at the right time, I like to think.

“We had no mods. Anyone could just turn names on and blow the game during that time. But nobody did. Everyone just wanted to have fun.” IcyGamma said in an email about it.

After the server had closed, IcyGamma was invited to join a server dedicated to the new game he had developed, hosted by a person who was involved in the previous server. The pair talked about possible modding opportunities, with a ghost team and a ghost buster team who would 'suck' the players up through a vacuum. Though Icy’s lack of programming experience with Blockland’s engine “Torque” would lead to the idea going unfulfilled.

IcyGamma left the server to find four other servers hosting the game. It was a surreal moment.

“I had just realized a 5 minute idea had suddenly latched onto a bunch of people. It started off as me and a couple of other players fooling around on a server with a game I had to make up on the spot, and next minute there are four servers with something like 24 players in total enjoying the game.” IcyGamma said. He explained this made him excited. He figured if a quick idea like that could have such an impact, then creating a mod or some other piece of content for the game could be an easy way to start a wildly popular project.

“At the time I considered the idea of becoming well-known in a community like that. I wondered if it was possible to do such a thing. Nobody was really 'popular' or 'talked about' back then. There were faces you recognized, but only because they were veterans of the game.” IcyGamma said. This was to be the start of his drive to run projects.

Chapter 3
IceShard Clan

IceShard logo, June 2008

IcyGamma became infatuated with clans. He had seen many clans in his short time playing the game, and they seemed like an exciting way to get a bunch of people together to start great ideas with. At this point in time, IcyGamma didn't understand how to host a Blockland server, so he sought refuge at dedicated servers.

While at a server hosted by a player named littlebear, IcyGamma began building ice houses in a hidden area of the kitchen map. He began bonding with players Antallion and Gen.Nick on the server, and soon he began pitching the idea of creating an ice clan after finding it a unique and fun idea. The group agreed to form the clan and IcyGamma went ahead and posted it on the forums, along with a build the group had made together.

IcyGamma chose the unusual motto “plus toast” for the clan. He says it was a playful joke.

During version 8, clans were generally given a bad wrap, to the point many were berated before being given a chance. Even today clans can still be discouraged to the point of disclosure before even taking off, but in 2008 the issue was far worse. In fact for a short period, users would simply spam 'OOPAH' on clan topics which would rapidly lead to the authors locking them.

“People believed there were too many boring clans coming and going and doing nothing. So I wrote 'survival of the fittest' in my post.” IcyGamma said.

In the end, the clan would launch well. It was complimented for a good post structure. IcyGamma wrote how he felt excited and was thinking up ideas for the group as he stood in the shower hours after launching it.

He had taken the strange move of spamming IceShard advertisements at the USSR server; the USSR clan was wildly popular and reserved for only the 'best' at the time. It is an iconic clan in Blockland history. While the spam was initially criticized, player chaseyqurt found it to be a smart move due to the traffic the server got. The issue was never brought up after that.

IceShard ad from USSR server, 2008. Source: dUMBELLS

“When I got back a user had already applied. His name was LewScapeOwner, also known was Lewnaja. At the time I didn't know who this guy was, but now I realize he was a bad egg.” IcyGamma said.

Lewnaja was known for causing trouble and drama, allegedly. IcyGamma accepted his application at first, but then booted him after learning about his behavior in the past.

“I just didn't want a guy like that in my clan. I should have looked into him first, but I didn't. It was my fault and I still feel bad about it now.” IcyGamma said. Despite what some people perceive as a harsh, arrogant, critical exterior, IcyGamma at heart did not like dealing with people in such a way. He had trouble disappointing players who he had committed to.

Lewnaja took it badly. He edited his posts and began writing angry messages. Though Lewnaja was not a clever chap, and he had no support from anyone. He would soon end up banned.

The damage was already done however. IceShard was tainted by Lewnaja's involvement, and despite a failed attempt at damage control, players were put off joining.

IceShard's two remaining members quickly left. Antallion announced he was migrating to another clan, even previously hinting he didn't want his position. Gen.Nick disapproved of the Lewnaja incident, saying letting Lew join was a bad decision. He had little involvement after the situation.

As hosting issues emerged almost instantly, IcyGamma closed the clan. He was already pursuing new ideas. A magazine called 'Blok' that would prove to be the first Blockland magazine ever made.

Chapter 4
Blok Magazine & Version 9

IcyGamma was impressed by seeing other online magazines and newsletters made for communities around the web, and felt that Blockland was the perfect place to launch one of his own.

“I like to create. After all, Blockland is the kind of game that entices creative types. I guess ironically, I was having more fun looking for ways to add to the community side of the game rather than building in the game itself.” IcyGamma said.

He named the magazine Blok, for obvious reasons. He didn't want the name 'Block' at the time, so he removed a single letter that made it look “much more fun” without ruining its sound.

Blok featured articles about the game, builds, community issues, and even had a section dedicated to images. It made its debut on June 2008 and received mixed response. Though issue 1 was periodically criticized for spelling errors and a sense of un-refinement, the Blok team grew to 7 people, including jaydee004, Tom, -Nick-, captain blue, Yeturn, and NoZoner.

Unknown to many, Ephialtes (who at the time was far less known of due to RTB not yet having been remade for retail) posted praise for the project, even wanting to know more about what the dimensions were for submitting adverts in the magazine.

“My initial thought was that this was going to be some lame magazine, but I quite liked it.” Ephialtes wrote. Though he saw that improvement, especially graphically, was required.

The magazine became quite successful. Though each issue was short, around 13 pages or less. Eventually, to improve the visual design, IcyGamma launched a competition for players to design their own logo. Out of the five or so designs submitted, a shiny blue graphic created by TheWorm was picked.

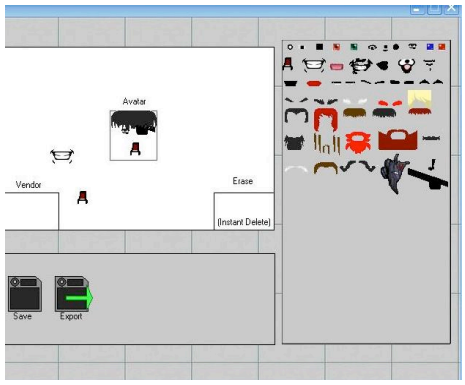
Blok had three issues released, and in-game builds were popping around servers made to look like mock-Blok offices to raise awareness of the project. However IcyGamma noticed the spiking popularity of the magazine, and began looking to expand it. His answer was a blog. He setup a website via Wordpress with the intention of using it to release material and send people there to download the magazine to get traffic. But IcyGamma was getting lazy with the project, and the website was only adding an extra complication that wasn't needed. He then launched a second website dedicated to Blockland photos, that was part of the Blok project, but both of

these websites would end up failing to deliver.

Three issues were released in total, and things slowed down. The latest issue was criticized for a biased “what’s hot what’s not” section and spamming of ads to make up for lack of content. IcyGamma was also accused of being heavily influenced by his own opinion. Throughout Blockland, some might say this was a typical IcyGamma trait; his views came first in almost everything he did.

One of IcyGamma's problems was his ideas started off with a punch of energy and then it would slowly fizzle out, until his heart was no longer in the project. And while IcyGamma was still new to the game, this behavior would be persistent in almost everything he ever did. Cracks were showing in the project.

IcyGamma had also decided to build and release a program in July while the Blok project was running. Called 'BlockoPaint' is allowed the user to create avatars. Though this project never lasted past version 2, as it could not export transparently. But the added workload slowed productivity down on everything he was doing.



BlockoPaint 1.0

IcyGamma became quickly agitated by running the magazine, handling staff, and complaints and issues that began to arise. On October the 2nd he hastily made the claim that Blok was too slow to cover anything the forums didn't and that it would be shut down forever. And that was that.

Prior to the closure, v9 had been released. IcyGamma speaks about it as perhaps one of the biggest events he has ever been apart of in Blockland.

“I remember the excitement. There wasn't an update for ages if I recall, and one this major was going to be a blast.” IcyGamma said. He explains how Blok had published an article speculating v9 features, and he was excited to see what was there.

“When I got home I saw loads of topics on the forums about v9, I crapped my pants. I ran the auto-updater and boom, we had used our data allowance for the month and I sat there with 5kb speeds watching it slowly update. It was painful and frustrating.” IcyGamma continued. He spent the day playing single player mostly, amazed at the new hand animation, water bricks, and other features. But for the time being, confused about events.

Now Blok was closed and v9 was out, IcyGamma wanted something else to do. He tried to reuse the logo TheWorm had created for another project, however this failed immediately as TheWorm intervened, shocked IcyGamma was attempting to use his logo for something other than the magazine. IcyGamma did not see the problem.

“I figured he made the logo, gave it to me, and didn't specify any restrictions of use.”

IcyGamma explained. And IcyGamma still believes he had the right to use the graphic, even now. But he didn't do it in the end. He told TheWorm he could relate to his situation, and purely out of goodwill would stop using the logo. TheWorm was thankful.

IcyGamma believed a lot in doing what is right, and what is ethical. He did not see the Internet in a way that many others do. He saw the people sitting behind the computers. He saw the human side to each user. And he could not tolerate anything that was unfair or unjustified. He writes about how this made him an angry person on the forum.

“I quickly realized the forums were just full of idiots. Nobody speaks sense. Nobody uses rational reasoning, or quality logic. Nobody tries to understand each other. Nobody tries to be fair to each other. Everyone is just a massive childish asshole thinking that being unnecessarily critical and posting half baked opinions makes them appear intellectual.” IcyGamma wrote, fuming.

IcyGamma was to later be considered pompous by many. He was even temporarily banned for implying he was “above” much of the community in 2011. Though while IcyGamma may not be superior in any way to anyone else at the forum, some may agree that he does have a point; the forums are a harsh place, and people do interact poorly with each other.

His growing bitterness towards the forum was realized during Blok. And now it was closed, he wasn't sure what to do or where to go. But with v9 having recently been released, things were about to get interesting.

Chapter 5
From iBlock to MicroBlock

Before v9 came around, IcyGamma did have another crack at a clan. It was called “iBlock” and to set the record straight, was the first clan to use such a name. It also used the IceShard motto of “with toast :D” again.

At the time Mac users were far fewer than they are now, and the game itself had bugs and issues. For example, version 8 for Mac couldn't play OGG files, and the user would instead hear static sound.

IcyGamma decided to create a group for Mac users only, in July 2008. It did well, hosting a number of servers and growing to a group of, at its peak, around six to eight members. It was initially criticized for only allowing Mac users in, but soon it opened up to “Windows and Linux users” as well.

The clan made an impression of sorts. USSR clan operator Facechild loathed the idea, publicly announcing iBlock would be an enemy of his group.

“I didn't have the... understanding of clans, or the Internet. My posts were retarded for much of 2008.” IcyGamma explained. Indeed, his opinions on computing and the Internet were constantly changing. The clan quickly died when IcyGamma posted how he had lost all faith in Macintosh, proclaiming in his last post at the iBlock topic: “fuck you Mac”.

This was IcyGamma's 3rd clan. He wasn't doing well on this front. And people were quickly starting to see IcyGamma's “short bursts of energy” on projects. For this clan lasted only two months.

But IcyGamma's desire to run a group did not end there. He always wanted to find the perfect clan. Nothing so far had felt like 'the one' for him. He tried joining groups, though many clans in v8 had the tendency to split up early just like his had.

Now it was v9 though. IcyGamma had previously disregarded the event system, but soon became interested in it.

“I spent a lot of time trying to understand how it (events) worked. Its a daunting interface. Badspot failed in making a GUI friendly for the end user.” IcyGamma told me.

He explained how his interest with events began when he started playing with a default build, and became interested in creating lights for his own house. From there, he began tinkering with events, starting to understand how the system worked.

“It was a great moment for me with the game. Lots of fun. Most people are bored by events but I really clicked with 'em.” IcyGamma said.

IcyGamma had figured out how to host during his time operating the iBlock clan. And he would often host freebuilds for a couple of hours. Though few people ever visited his servers.

One day IcyGamma was sitting alone on his server. He was thinking about builds, and events, when he began to build a cute little brick formation. It was a 2x2 green brick, with two transparent prints on top (one microchip print at the bottom, and one mini-screen print on the top). As he sat there, he noticed how nice it looked as a logo. And then it dawned on him. What if there was a clan that taught events.

The v8 clan overload still existed, leaking over into v9 (though now many clans had receded, the stigma of opening one still existed). IcyGamma was still into operating a clan. His failed attempts before made him more determined to make a clan work. And now he felt he had an original idea. Indeed, no other clan existed ever before that based itself on the v9 event system. Some have debated whether this is true or not, however based on post dates, MicroBlock was and always has been the first. There was however an event clan in v8, though IcyGamma had never seen it before as it failed to operate successfully, and it was based on SpaceGuy's unofficial event system which was totally eradicated in version 9. There was also a building clan that had an eventing sector shortly before IcyGamma devised his idea, though this clan was neither successful nor actually engaged in eventing, let alone having full-time dedication to it.

IcyGamma got excited. He took a photo of the logo he had made and began thinking of names. In the end, he chose the name MicroBlock. Micro (for microchip) and block (for Blockland). A common misconception is that MicroBlock was based on Microsoft, though IcyGamma was inspired more by Apple Inc, which was reflected best in his computer commercials.

“I like to be original. So MicroBlock had to be unique. I was inspired by Apple, but I didn't want it to be a spoof clan or a rip-off. That would make people take it less seriously. I wanted it to be a pseudo-company as opposed to a joke clan.” IcyGamma said.

MicroBlock was made to be a clan that taught events. And when it was announced on September 21st 2008, it was a massive hit. It was praised for being a great new idea, and its member list grew rapidly.

IcyGamma began hosting as much as he could, with users flocking to his server for the first time to participate in the “MicroBlock event freebuild”. The server, hosted in bedroom, was littered with event contraptions. IcyGamma was having a ball of a time. This would prove to be the most memorable and enjoyable gaming experience he would ever have in Blockland. Though IcyGamma still had little knowledge of how events worked, but he was learning quickly. He was hoping he'd be able to teach himself. And he did become very interested in understanding the event system the more he saw what people were doing with it.

Each day IcyGamma would load up Slate Blueprint and build event ideas. But one day while playing in single player on the map, IcyGamma had an idea of big proportions. Little did he know, this imaginative spark of inspiration would lead to a build that was responsible for creating a whole new breed of clans and builds, from Blockintosh to iEvent. He had devised a unique idea for what to do with events. To build a computer with them.

Chapter 6
Introducing the IcyDesktop

IcyGamma had created an idea. One that he grew excited about. One that would let him learn how to event, and that would be the foundation for his future build ideas.

“I thought to myself, I could build hardware with bricks and stick it in a case. Replicate a computer with events. I got really excited about the whole concept.

“It had never been done before. People had made interactive screens and such, but nobody had tried to build a computer like I wanted to.” IcyGamma said. And he was right. He had a unique build going for him.

During this time, few had the chance to create great things with events. Many were still learning. So anything could be amazing. And to tell people you had created a computer, would be simply astounding.

IcyGamma spent a couple of days building his computer. It would have a large screen that would change images each time the user switched programs, an on / off button, hardware that flickered inside the machine, and a button that allowed users to pretend they were working on the device. It was a computer designed for roleplay. And it was an achievement for IcyGamma.

“I was so excited to release it. Making the gallery topic on the forums was a memorable time.” IcyGamma said.

While today the build is technically and visually unimpressive, the computer was the first of its kind. It was unique, and built from original ideas and concepts.

He named it the IcehDesktop 1000. It would soon be know as the “IcyDesktop”.

When it had gone up on the forums during late September in 2008, it was a hit. It received positive response initially, people flocking to read and post about it. In fact it drummed up so much interest, it would create a whole new branch of builds; evented electronics.

“I made evented electronics what they are today. My ideas for how the screen should look and work, how the keyboard should be laid out, and what basic features are expected from a computer lasted even to this day. People still use aspects of the original IcyDesktop.” IcyGamma explained to me over Skype. Though some may disagree with this, IcyGamma did inspire the original event builds by other players to function in the way they did that year.

IcyGamma's build got him noticed. And people saw him as someone who knew what he was doing with his events. But this was not true at first. IcyGamma did not know much about

eventing. In fact, he had so much trouble implementing toggleEventEnabled he decided to use two separate buttons for the on and off switch. But this is not what IcyGamma wanted people knowing.

“I made myself out to be king of events. I wanted people to have confidence in my builds. And it worked at first. But the illusion of perfection couldn't last forever.” IcyGamma admitted to me.

For the IcyDesktop 1000, while inspiringly cute, was unimpressively basic. And as the weeks went by, other players began to understand the event system, and realize the simplistic setup (and perhaps lack of effort in perfecting the events on each brick) made the IcyDesktop 1000 nothing but a piece of eye candy. Though even that was a far stretch.

IcyDesktop 1001

The IcyDesktop 1000 was silver and chrome. It was square, and frankly, ugly and bulky. Though IcyGamma wanted players to incorporate the build into their houses and office builds, but it was never going to happen if it looked the way it did. So IcyGamma set out to make the 1001 model, even though his event knowledge was still little.

The IcyDesktop 1001 featured a bigger keyboard with more programs. It had more speakers too. But perhaps most obviously, it had a transparent case that let you see into the device. It was also colored green. He also began making commercials for the builds he created. The new look of the build, combined with the mock-company approach IcyGamma was taking, would make this the most downloaded computer build ever in the history of Blockland up until 2011.

IcyGamma's work inspired one person in particular. His name was MackTheHunter, and he was one of the first people to reply to the topic. On the 26th of September, Mack posted he would make his own computer after seeing IcyGamma's work.

“I took no notice of Mack's claims at first. I wasn't sure how I felt. I was protective over my work. I still am.” IcyGamma said.

The computers would last for a while. In the end, they would each gain several hundred downloads and become what some may consider an iconic part of the v9 experience. For many players of that time recall IcyGamma and the “Blockland computer wave” that made that year an interesting one for the online community. Though not everybody loved the builds. In fact as time went by, some would slate them as being useless, ugly, and a waste of time. And IcyGamma would soon learn his ideas, however protective he was, would be easily taken from him.

Chapter 7
MicroBlock vs Blockintosh

IcyGamma had originally released his builds under IcyEvents which was a mock brand. But IcyEvents was going to disappear very quickly. And this was thanks to Blockintosh.

MackTheHunter, who was known then under the alias ImTheHunter, released his own event clan called Blockintosh. The initial response was that Mack had ripped off MicroBlock. Some even suggested this was even a shoddy spoof of IcyGamma's previous clan, iBlock. And IcyGamma felt the same way too.

“At the time I felt MackTheHunter had shamelessly observed my clans and my builds, then taken a little piece of everything to form some kind of Frankenstein.” IcyGamma said. Indeed, he was quoted as having posted how it was “really creepy” and how he felt his old clans had been mashed together by Mack to create Blockintosh. Though IcyGamma accepted Mack's decision to create the group, and acknowledged the competition. But this wasn't all Mack did. He also made his own evented computer.

“Mack made his own computer that looked like a Mac. He even posted how MicroBlock was like Microsoft and Blockintosh was like Apple. This was not how I viewed it, and I still get angry even now about how he brainwashed people into believing that.” IcyGamma said over Skype. IcyGamma was inspired by Macintosh, and though he had disowned Mac's in the past, it didn't take long before he loved them once more.

But one thing IcyGamma did learn from Blockintosh, was how using a clan to represent computer builds would be a cool and successful way to create a team of eventers and really make the mock-company feel like a real organization. IcyEvents was soon dumped, and IcyGamma silently and seamlessly made the IcyDesktop a MicroBlock product. He didn't want many people noticing this. He wanted the change to be quiet and swift.

“I liked the idea of using the clan for the brand... I'd accused Mack of being a bit of a thief so I didn't want him knowing that I'd basically taken the idea of using my event clan as the logo for my computers, as if it was a real company.” IcyGamma admitted.

IcyGamma did not like Mack's work however. While initially trying to be a good sport about it, IcyGamma grew increasingly bitter about how Mack was stealing the attention from MicroBlock. Though this did not dent MicroBlock's popularity. In fact, IcyGamma had quickly grown the clan, and soon it would reach a milestone of over 30 people.

IcyGamma and Mack soon met together and formed an alliance. IcyGamma was playing tactical. He hoped Mack might get bored of running the group and fail like so many clans have in the past. For Icy, MicroBlock was the best group he had ever run, and he was loving it. Now Mack was here to potentially ruin it.

“I formed a truce. At first it was tactical, but then he started hosting joint servers for us, and I actually enjoyed it.” IcyGamma said. But the cracks were already showing in their friendship, and things would soon turn ugly.

In the meantime, IcyGamma released a laptop version of his computers. He even created the term “BLPC” standing for “Blockland Pixel Computer”. IcyGamma wanted to see if people would take this abbreviation and start using it. He became paranoid people were taking his ideas as more and more players began releasing computers of their own, that were of considerably poorer quality, and looked suspiciously like the IcyDesktop range.

“I started to load builds by others and see if my brick names were there. I went overboard. I got over protective, I hated seeing people steal my design ideas and not credit me. And they did. Some even perfectly copied the keyboard layout I had made specifically for the IcyDesktop 1000.” IcyGamma said on Skype. He got angry and ranted on about this in our discussion.

IcyGamma was proud and protective. In all his work, he has been unashamedly arrogant and confident about his creations. To some, this is the sign of someone who knows what they are doing and will stick to their guns. To others, this was an offensive and undesirable trait that would earn him many enemies and so called “haters”.

As IcyGamma grew paranoid, more clans began to emerge that worsened the situation. One clan, called Blocknux, promised to be the Linux version of the BLPC world. This further fueled the Microsoft vibe that MicroBlock was being associated with, and annoyed IcyGamma further. Though Mack was unaware of IcyGamma's position or attitude.

“Mack showed me one of his computer builds before he released it. I liked bits of it, except how he tried to stop players from opening the inside and learning from the events. I'm protective, but not that protective. That disgusted me.” IcyGamma said, referring to bricks that obscured the computer's insides, that would set off destruction events if a player tried to remove it and see how the computer worked. Back then, “named brick > kill” events existed by default. Mack was playing unethical to him.

IcyGamma did grow fond of Blockintosh at one point. He agreed to create commercials for them, as Mack had complimented his video editing skill. Though this was a dirty mistake. IcyGamma slandered MicroBlock in the ads to make them more similar to the real Macintosh ads (based off the Mac vs PC commercials Apple ran). At first it was about goodwill, but Icy quickly regretted it. He had accidentally sealed MicroBlock's likeliness to Microsoft.

“It seemed funny to laugh at myself and my clan, at first. But then I realized, hey, this is hurting MicroBlock.” IcyGamma told me.

This wasn't the only problem. MicroBlock was losing members. Some were leaving officially, others disappearing. The culprit? Blockintosh.

“They hosted more, they had a shiner topic, they were more into bullshitting around then working on builds or eventing, which appealed to the mindless masses of eventer-wannabes. Mack sucked at events, he never made anything new or innovative. But he knew how to run a damn fine clan, one that MicroBlock started struggling to compete with.” IcyGamma said. At this point, IcyGamma had begun to master events, and he started to look down on Blockintosh members, who largely had little idea of how events worked. Compared to MicroBlock members, they were far behind in their creativity and event knowledge. IcyGamma took other event clans less seriously, as many players attempted to replicate the success of MicroBlock and Blockintosh.

“I remember when iEvent came along, I sat down with Mack in a server and told him, 'they won't last five minutes',” IcyGamma laughs. Little did they know the iEvent clan would last for years, eventually taking over Blockintosh in 2011.

Luckily, despite Blockintosh's increasing grip, MicroBlock was still successful and there was plenty of time to win back the community. IcyGamma's clan had become big. It was being talked about alongside major groups like USSR. He had done what he had always wanted to. Created a massive, popular clan, that he loved.

IcyGamma enjoyed making new builds, releasing new types of computers, from Jukeboxes, to futuristic projector computers. He also had developed a strong bond with a clan member called Noruzenchi. Noru had joined the group and worked his way up to co-leader. He was even featured alongside IcyGamma in the official MicroBlock logo, which was changed to show their iconic green brick design with IcyGamma, Noruzenchi, and a MicroBlock member laying over the top of it.

MicroBlock logo 2008. From left to right: Noruzenchi, unknown MicroBlock member, IcyGamma.

“Noruzenchi was the best Blockland friend I had. He was funny, friendly, and no matter how much I fucked up, he supported me. A genuinely great fellow. Few people I've ever met online were so human.” IcyGamma speaks about Noruzenchi fondly.

Blockintosh soon allied with Blocknux. It began hosting joint servers with their group, but quickly forgot about hosting MicroBlock servers. IcyGamma grew bitter at this. Meanwhile, Blockintosh members had developed an anti-MicroBlock attitude that IcyGamma was noticing. He was becoming unwelcome at the servers.

“They didn't like me. They probably hated my involvement with Mack. I dunno...” IcyGamma said.

Though Mack would deny this was ever an issue, some suspect IcyGamma's increasingly angry and controlling behavior contributed to this, and that the clan had an issue with IcyGamma himself. Though IcyGamma claims even his clan members reported abuse from Blockintosh players. IcyGamma was angry at Blockintosh. But he held it down, until one day, the worst happened.

Chapter 8
Sudden Death

The year was nearing the end, and outside of the game, a poor economy had affected IcyGamma's family.

“My father lost his management job at a company that folded. The CEO basically fucked up big time.

“We had to sell our dream custom built house. The banks were being bitchy. Our house was big and beautiful. It hurt us. But we found an even better career path for my father at the other end of the country in a bigger city, Christchurch. It worked out in the end.” IcyGamma explains.

He would have to take leave for a while as they moved. Unfortunately, IcyGamma was under increased pressure in the Blockland community. His high profile with MicroBlock made him a target for arguments and trolling. And the stress of the clan, coupled with the enraging actions of Blockintosh, and other players who wanted a piece of the BLPC eventing craze, came crashing down on his head.

“I basically posted I was going away for a while. But then I went too far made a topic where I was confusingly apologetic and angry at the same time.” IcyGamma hesitantly explained to me. In short, he had posted an extremely out-of-character leaving topic, that was cringingly written and destroyed a lot of his reputation almost instantly. The community backlashed against the topic, shocked and disgusted at IcyGamma's behavior.

And of course, such dramatic topics are a bannable offense.

IcyGamma had been permanently banned. His account, along with the MicroBlock topic that he had locked before leaving just in case, were now out of reach forever. He had “fucked up big time”.

“I logged in one day before leaving, and there it was. My heart nearly stopped. I felt a wave of anger, sadness, and embarrassment wash over me. I realized I had just blown my ability to release any new computers.” IcyGamma explained to me.

The ban wasn't taken lightly. It made IcyGamma furious. He blamed Blockintosh for pushing him to the edge. He registered a new account at the forums under an alias name 'The4DBlock' after using an anonymous IP service. He then posted a shocking rant on the Blockintosh clan topic, highlighting his anger and his issues with Blockintosh. He then announced he was destroying the alliance.

It stunned everyone.

And of course, IcyGamma was banned again. In fact the ban was so severe, Blockland creator Badspot posted a drama topic about IcyGamma labeling him as the “dramawhore extroadinaire”. By this point, some of IcyGamma's friends and supporters came forward and admitted they had noticed he was becoming worse. Some even believed he had gone too far and lost it. IcyGamma saw these posts, and took it personally; he felt betrayed by his friends.

Though IcyGamma soon found the Return To Blockland v3 website, which had its own forums. Ephialtes, who had previous complimented IcyGamma's Blok magazine, was now working on bringing back RTB and had released a version for retail unlike any mod seen before.

Typically, banned members from the official forums would seek refuge at the RTB forums (so much so, it soon lead to Ephialtes locking up the entire forum after it became a target for spam and drama). IcyGamma reposted the MicroBlock topics there roughly several weeks after fateful incident. But this was naïve. IcyGamma had been gone for too long, as far as the fast-paced clan world of Blockland was concerned. Many considered him as good as dead after the ban. In fact for a while, it was a genuine rumor he had been killed in a crash.

His major clan had now reduced to dust. Though MicroBlock was still a memorable clan brand, all of its 30 members had disbanded. MicroBlock had slipped away from his grasp. And few people realized IcyGamma was still playing, hosting, and posting online.

“The Blockland forums is the central hub. Once you are gone from there, you disappear into awkwardness. No clan can survive after its owner gets a ban like I did.” IcyGamma tells me over Skype, seeming freshly disappointed about the whole experience.

IcyGamma loved MicroBlock, its members, and eventing. He now felt a big part of his online life had been crushed by one “stupid topic”. He was devastated, and became depressive for weeks afterwards.

“At first I didn't care. Then I realized what I had done, what I had lost, and what people now thought of me in the community. I'd blown a cool opportunity to run something great online in the community that, at the time, I liked. It really depressed me. Perhaps more than it should have.” IcyGamma admitted.

IcyGamma had originally spoken to Noruzenchi after his ban, and Noru supported him as always. IcyGamma had grown very attached to him as a player. But now weeks had passed and MicroBlock had disbanded, IcyGamma struggled to find him in-game. Until one day, Noruzenchi was tracked down. IcyGamma and Noru were alone together on a server.

“I remember this more than any conversation I've ever had online. We sat in the window of the bedroom map.” IcyGamma said.

Icy explained how Noruzenchi turned to him and said he was not interested in being a part

of MicroBlock anymore. But perhaps even worse, Noruzench had joined Blockintosh.

IcyGamma was utterly devastated. More so then when he was banned. His long time friend was not only now disinterested in supporting him and his clan, but had joined the rival. The enemy. The loathsome opponent that IcyGamma had struggled to battle. IcyGamma felt his co-leader and friend was stolen from him.

“I was so unbelievably hurt. It just felt wrong. When I really needed him, he decided to drop out. And what hurt the most was he joined Blockintosh, who were shit at events and were only interesting because they had a facade of style and class.” IcyGamma explained.

Icy felt that Blockintosh hid behind a false illusion of style, class, and innovation. He felt MicroBlock came across more as the conservative, hard working, gritty craftsmen which didn't appeal to most players looking for a fun time and a “cheap piece of the eventing action”. He felt Noruzenchi had fallen for the phony image of Blockintosh.

“I asked him why. He told me I had been gone for so long and he needed to be involved in an events clan that was alive. He wasn't interested in MicroBlock, even though I was trying to revive it.” IcyGamma told me.

The two went to slate and walked along a default garden build, sitting on chairs under cherry blossom trees. They talked about it for a while. It became more depressing and personal. Soon they said goodbye to each other. That was the last time IcyGamma would ever speak to Noruzenchi, who was his best friend in the game. He would only ever see him two times in the next few years, where they would not talk, presumably due to the awkward nature of what happened. Though despite this, Noruzenchi was clearly hurt by what had happened. Not enough to ever try to append the situation though. IcyGamma likes to think perhaps it was a predicament that Noru just didn't want to face. It was better off left in the past. However, IcyGamma has never forgotten Noruzenchi, and says he never will.

IcyGamma attempted to relaunch MicroBlock twice. Once on RTB, dubbed the 'MicroBlock: The Blazing Wrench Project' and later on in 2009 he attempted to launch the 'Black Wrench' project which aimed to created abusive events, a concept IcyGamma developed after he grew angry at how the community was treating him. Both flopped badly. IcyGamma would also end up trying to relaunch IceShard but also failed to get things running well. It was a bad time for him.

IcyGamma never understood why people were so aggressive and personally scathing towards him. He would often meet people he had never met before, who hadn't played the game for long, who posted rude things about him.

IcyGamma was honest. He always posted what he thought. Sometimes it was critical or insensitive. And sometimes he'd perhaps go too far. But he had an ethical approach to writing posts, and whenever somebody wrote something unfair, immoral, or unconsidered, it angered and confused him. He failed to accept the internet was a place where people should

be allowed to post “pathetic and damaging things”. And he resented the Blockland forums for being filled with what he called “people who post fake opinions, bandwagon, and put on displays of pseudo-intellect because they think thats what maturity means”. In short, he started hating the forums.

“I blamed the forums as a whole. But I still wanted to use the website, as I wasn't finished with my projects, and I couldn't let myself believe everyone in Blockland was a bad egg.” IcyGamma explained. Though that didn't stop him holding contempt for a lot of people for little reason; some would call that hypocritical.

IcyGamma blames the forum for making him so unpleasant, too.

“I was happy, excited, and friendly when I joined the forums. My posts slowly became angry and frustrated. Ask anyone who knew me then, people noticed this. And it was because of those idiots like Colten, Tails, bisjac-- you know the type. Pompous forum vets who annoy people to the point of breakdown, like me, then later claim that they are always angry and their actions are stupid, when its their fault we are like that in the first place.” IcyGamma wrote during a Steam conversation. He appeared to be very angry while talking about this. It clearly didn't sit right with him.

“The forum is crap, literally because of the actions of about 10 people, who unsurprisingly are all good friends with each other. Trolls breed trolls.” IcyGamma continued.

This view of players at the forum left him confused. He failed to understand why, when he was contributing builds and ideas, he was being targeted by people he hadn't met before, as opposed to those who did nothing but upset other players. Even now, he happily rants about how wrong this is to him.

“People give me an unfair wrap. I bet I'm not the only one. If you have ever been treated poorly or drama'd unnecessarily, you'll know what I'm talking about.” IcyGamma said. During his time banned, he developed a cynical view on everyone he had known. He began to loathe MackTheHunter, and even those that were part of his clan who he felt had “betrayed him”. But he stayed productive.

He released refined computers, such as the IcyDesktop 3000 which he released in 2009. Even now, it is still perhaps the most refined BLPC ever made based off the original philosophy. He also created a “wireless” chat computer using a server that allowed players to communicate using a system that looked like a pager on a computer screen.

“My builds are used and remembered because I was the only one who ever took BLPCs seriously. Blockintosh made like, three computers that were identical, that were all half-broken and did nothing. Then they never made anything again. They talk the talk but don't walk the walk. In short, they are shit.” IcyGamma told me.

These builds were very clever, but few people got to see them. The RTB forums had much

less traffic than the main forum, and the gallery forum there had slim activity comparatively. The builds never got the attention they deserved. Even in 2011, iEvent owner TomTheGeek was surprised and intrigued at the IcyDesktop 3000, which he had never seen or heard of, even though it was released two years prior.

IcyGamma fell out of favor with eventing clans for a while. MicroBlock became obscure as the year moved on. Though one day, IcyGamma had a new ambition. He had been working on a Youtube account for a while, and he was coming up with new ideas for content. He began focusing on comedy and shorts. He was about to begin a project that would be his most successful ever, that would make him a very well known player in the Blockland world in a matter of months.

Chapter 9
The IcyGamma Clones

IcyGamma had opened a Youtube channel which he was filling with videos. Random yet creative movies, often based on satirical humor of the community.

His first voiced video was a news bulletin where he made comments about Blockland happenings, even taking a dig at Blockintosh in a sketch where he announced; “Blockintosh have created a new computer, embracing their philosophy of pure simplicity, by making it so simple it is completely invisible... like the rest of their computers, it follows the tradition of doing absolutely nothing new or useful.”

This was a critical dig based of past grievances. Though IcyGamma insists it was all in good humor.

“I remember voicing that first video I was nervous, I thought I'd be ridiculed for my British / New Zealand fusion accent. But no, people actually liked it.” IcyGamma said.

But as time went on, he began looking to create a series. He developed a video called “the IcyGamma Clones go to a bar” in which a bunch of characters dressed as IcyGamma partied at a bar. It was filmed in Cloverfield fashion. And despite his worries about his voice in the previous video, it turns out his unique accent would add an extra dimension to his characters than earned him more viewers.

“The clones were not created from creativity. They were created from practicality.” IcyGamma explained how the clones were only made because he couldn't find voice actors. He wasn't for the tacky voice morphing effects either, which he believes never sound authentic.

“I wanted multiple people, but I couldn't get multiple voices. The solution? Use the same voice multiple times. But I had to develop a plausible plot for this. So I made the characters clones.” IcyGamma said.

This simple idea created a new series. He developed stories using these characters, where the clones would go on adventures and typically make stupid comments and do stupid things leading to death or destruction. Perhaps the most iconic video he ever made was an episode of the clones stuck inside an elevator, who torment a man stuck at the back, trying to get off at a floor in the fictional MicroBlock tower.

“Its a simple idea that proved a hit. It was the voicing, the light humor, and the simplicity of the video.” IcyGamma said.

He always believed that nothing should ever overpower the script. A good plot and solid lines were crucial to every video and movie IcyGamma ever made.

“The script is the most important. The editing must be clean and perfect to back it up, but not overpowering to the point the entire video is depending on fancy visuals.” IcyGamma told me.

This philosophy was the key to his success with Blockland videos. He had a way of making sure the videos were edited in a way that made them just right. A careful balance of interesting visuals and sharp editing. Though this philosophy ended up alienating him from the rest of the Blockland video creators because he belittled those who he felt depended too much on FX. In the future, h regularly criticized popular video maker Eksi for his heavy hand in video effects.

“Yeah, I gave him a hard time about it. I still do. Eksi's videos are crap. He has no original ideas. His story lines and concepts are poor. He just tries to distract his viewers by putting on a display of stunning graphics and visuals. In the end, thats all it offers. Eye candy.” IcyGamma told me.

But IcyGamma hadn't met Eksi in 2009. He was too busy making his channel what it was. And as time went on, he began to win back some of the community.

IcyGamma quickly became well known within the community. By 2010, he would be an extremely well known player. But the effects of what some might call “fame” were already getting to him.

“I got identified in servers at first. Eventually everywhere I went, someone knew me.

“It was cool at first, but then it got embarrassing. I hated people saying I was 'famous' because thats just... a gross way to put it. Its an overstatement.” IcyGamma said.

He wanted recognition, but not harassment. This was not how it worked.

As months went on, IcyGamma became lazier with his work. The clones became a drain on him. People started dressing up as him, and some even went as far to use spoof names such as “LcyGamma” or “IceyGamma”. By late 2010, over 30 people had used names based on his. This was even more than Ephialtes impersonators at the time, which was shocking.

“It got to the point where I'd go to a server. Someone would praise my work, then someone else would blatantly insult me and give a hard time to the person who complimented me. Then they'd argue that I was an imposter despite all the obvious signs I wasn't.” IcyGamma said.

Imposters would dress up in the wrong colors, have a name that was clearly fake, and speak with poor English and grammar most of the time. So for IcyGamma, being confused with the fakes really insulted him. It was a frustrating moment. And it would haunt him for the rest of his Blockland experience.

Then came the fanboys who wanted to be involved with his work. He began to be awkwardly asked by fans if they could film with him. The answer was the same all the time. No.

“When I made the videos, I used bots. I was one of the first to use Amades bot system entirely for my characters, as opposed to filming with real people. So whenever somebody asked to be involved, I had no choice but to decline. Secretly, I wouldn't have said yes either way.” IcyGamma admitted.

IcyGamma had trouble working with real people in movies. He spoke of how it was always a long, frustrating, slow process, and how time zones made it difficult. This lead to many of his videos being solo projects. This antisocial approach was worsened by his growing dislike for Blockland players and how he was treated. He felt that nobody deserved to be in his projects. And he felt let down by those who tried. In short, he didn't trust anyone. After having some of his Blockland friends turn on him, and having been abandoned by Noruzenchi, IcyGamma was not prepared to get close to anyone again online. He viewed it as a naïve, desperate thing to do; online friends were hollow friends to him.

“I'll admit it, I got protective about my work. Its what I always do. But this was about practical reasons as well. I didn't have the time, or the patience.” IcyGamma told me.

IcyGamma's channel made him become as well known as he is today. Though not everyone liked his videos. Some were never aware of his channel, and as IcyGamma became more talked about, some people complained “who is this guy anyway?”

Other forum-goers simply didn't like him or his work. An impression was left behind from past grievances that would taint his reputation in the community forever. And with every new project IcyGamma launched, it would earn him both admirers and critics. Some even flat out hated him to the point they would make it their business in the future to attack him on the forum, regardless what he said. Or at least, that is how IcyGamma felt.

“People kept telling me I was an attention whore because I liked making content. This is the words of jealous people; usually these trolls would just be upset that I was well known because I put the effort into being creative.” IcyGamma said. He felt there was an element of envy.

“When people tell you your hard work is related to your ego, your arrogance, your want for attention... you'd think I'd get angry, but I didn't. Obviously that was a stupid thing for them to say, they don't understand the joys of being productive and creative.

“These nasty comments are pretty much posted over and over as generic insults, against me and many others. This is just your typical forum idiot trying to sound smart with buzzwords.” IcyGamma said. This was evidence of his dislike for the behavior of people on the forum. In fact such disregard for forum opinion soon infuriated people who knew of

him. Though for IcyGamma, it made him more headstrong.

IcyGamma believed he was better than people on the forum. He felt his way of thinking, and his ethical approach, made his posts more considered then the “childish rants” that many others “relentlessly spammed”.

“IcyGamma is very talented, and can be a nice guy. I think he was just too proud. He often, probably unintentionally, acted like he was above the rest.” Mysteroo, one of many Blocklander 's who witnessed IcyGamma's history, posted at the Blockland forums.

The clones weren't all he worked on. IcyGamma came out with sketches and short movies based on various themes, such as mock-talk shows, and even a staged live spoof-comedy tour.

IcyGamma also ended up making longer movies in the future. IcyGamma's decision to make movies was not a random one. In 2008 a full year before, IcyGamma did have a shot at making a zombie drama but it was never released after he couldn't compress it to a small file size and didn't have the Internet that could handle it as an upload.

He would make a 20 minute action disaster movie using bots in late 2009 called Blockmeadow (based off Cloverfield). In 2010 he also made what some consider to be his best work, one of few drama movies ever released in Blockland named Thereafter (IcyGamma was going to call it Hereafter until a real movie came out with the name; it has no relation to the real movie) which is arguably one of the most considered movies made for Blockland, maybe even inappropriately complex and emotionally deep for an audience of lego players (more on this later).

Aside from his own videos, IcyGamma also contributed to a few other movies. He was a last minute voice actor in the iconic Blockland movie Away At War 2.

“I was asked to do it. I said I was no good for acting in other movies, but DarkStar insisted. I think I did a fucking terrible job.” IcyGamma admitted.

He was also asked to take the lead in Swholli's Block Wars: No Hope, but he declined as he knew he felt he was not suitable for the role at all.

“At heart I wanted to say yes. Practically, I couldn't do it. Ever. Period.” IcyGamma told me.

IcyGamma also came close to working with Eksi. One day at his server, they began talking. Eksi took to IcyGamma after he told him about his view on the forum and his troubles in the past. IcyGamma feels Eksi pitied him.

“Maybe he wanted to cheer me up. Or perhaps my resilience impressed him.” IcyGamma pondered.

IcyGamma was going to help write a script for a movie with Eksi, while Eksi would execute the movie itself. Although the friendship quickly deteriorated one day while IcyGamma was laying down some black humor on Eksi's server.

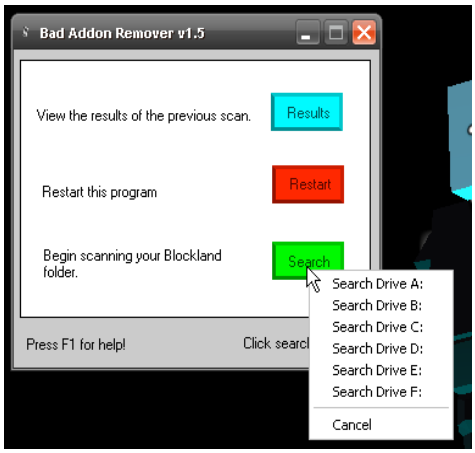
“You are too negative.” Eksi told IcyGamma. He even threatened to ban him for it. IcyGamma, in his typical way, found this unethical, and left at his own accord.

“I still give him a ribbing for it even now. That pansy telling me my tone was too negative. What planet is that headcase on?” IcyGamma rants about Eksi.

“With Eksi's visual over-kill, and my scripts, I think we could have made something really impressive. But alas, Blockland, Eksi blew it over his desire to be an emotional nazi. Apparently I'm not allowed to feel anymore.” IcyGamma joked.

Chapter 10
Winbin, the Rebellion Against RTB

It may surprise many to know that IcyGamma created one of the first programs to combat bad add-ons in Blockland. Anything that was fail binned would be added to his program's database, which would automatically bulk delete any undesirable files from the Blockland folder in seconds. It was called BAR (bad addon remover) and it was released as an EXE file on the forums on September 6th 2008.



BAR version 1.5, 2008.

Though his philosophy to removing add-ons changed.

"I started to realize that files were failed for bad reasons when RTB came along. If your file was a few KB too big or had a line of code that could have been written more efficiently, Ephialtes would fail it. He was a nazi of add-ons." IcyGamma said. He believed RTB was trying to cleanse add-ons based on whimsical, unstable guidelines, and that Ephialtes was biased in his handling of mods. He felt there was abuse, and censorship. He did not like this at all.

IcyGamma did appreciate RTB's revolutionary way of sharing add-ons however. He used the service to release his own mods. His most successful being his original snore emote, which created a burst of Zzzz's around the players head. He worked with Slicksilver555 in 2010 to release version 2 of the emote, which had a keybind option. This would prove to be his most successful add-on of all time. To this day, it has well over 17,000 downloads.

IcyGamma had little ability to do anything about his issues with RTB. Ephialtes was now a big name in Blockland once again. His system and mod had stormed Blockland, and become an integral part of the game for the community. Just about every Blockland player had or would end up getting a copy of RTB. And Ephialtes now had moderator control at the Blockland forums.

"He left the RTB forum to turn into a wasteland, and instead prioritized his new found position on the forums." IcyGamma told me. He believed Ephi was on a power trip, and he wasn't alone with this feeling.

At the time IcyGamma often got into heavy arguments with Iban at the RTB forum. He was again becoming argumentative and angry, and this soon lead him to speak out against RTB.

IcyGamma posted a topic outlining his feelings towards Ephialtes being a lousy administrator for the website, and felt he was neglecting the people at the forum. He also wrote about his issues with the add-on review criteria. A couple of users began to rise up and agree with IcyGamma's points. But things turned ugly.

Another user at the website, named TheToxicRadio, came and posted offensive comments about Ephialtes in the topic, and turned it into a rage about how he hated the site. IcyGamma did not approve of his behavior at all.

“I'd had a lot of experience by now, knowing what was right to post and what was downright wrong. And TheToxicRadio was a complete nutjob. I did not support his posts at all.” IcyGamma told me. He seemed agitated about the whole situation even while typing this to me in Steam.

TheToxicRadio's aggressive comments lead to Ephialtes stepping in. It resulted in IcyGamma, TheToxicRadio, and another user who agreed with the topic being banned permanently from the forum. IcyGamma was furious.

“I felt helpless. All I did was post my opinion for change, and then I got banned because some other idiot started posting terrible things about Ephi in my topic. It wasn't fair at all, it was just wrong. Foul play, total foul play.” IcyGamma ranted.

Again, IcyGamma had trouble accepting the situation. He felt his comments were a practice of free speech; he wanted to share his opinion to improve the website. And now he was banned largely because of somebody else’s actions. Ephialtes argues that IcyGamma stepped over the line when he called him a bad administrator. But to Icy, Ephi was being unethical. And IcyGamma's skewed view of moral obligation on the Internet made him unable to come to terms with what happened.

“From then on, I knew Ephialtes for who he was. He made bad decisions, he was selfish, he was immoral, and above all he was on a power trip but pretended he wasn't.” IcyGamma said. Clearly even now, he does not think of Ephialtes well.

“He's just some web programmer in the UK, who is just that little bit too old to be playing Blockland. Perhaps the crap economy lead to him having no other work to do.” IcyGamma sniped (we ended the conversation there that day, as IcyGamma was becoming verbally abusive about the whole situation-- I’ll save you the rant).

His growing dislike for Ephialtes was not surprising, according to IcyGamma.

“Ephialtes kept referring to his 'anti-Ephi' club. All of these people were basically those who had crossed his path.” IcyGamma told me.

He believed that anyone who had tried to engage or challenge Ephialtes would usually end up hating him. Though in reality this is an outrageous claim, IcyGamma still feels there is some truth to that theory.

“I was never scared of standing up and saying, hey, you are being a douchebag and fucking up big time, this is what you are doing wrong, fix it.” IcyGamma said.

He viewed himself as a voice for the people who were too “spineless” to stand up for what they felt. After his ban at the RTB forum, he witnessed supporters of his topic (against RTB’s issues) had suddenly gotten cold feet about the situation and denied their involvement.

“They are too scared to say anything. People act like Ephi and Badspot are God. No, its wrong to think like this. Badspot is running a business. Ephialtes is just trying to do something with his spare time. Neither should be treated like a special cause.” IcyGamma told me.

For Icy, he realized how quickly people would idolize players. He disliked people that would attempt to “suck-up” to him, or anyone else for that matter.

“On one occasion this guy built a shrine of me in Minecraft. Hey, it was cute. But it was just as creepy. It made me feel bad for him and me.” IcyGamma admits. He appreciated fan gestures, but at the same time, he felt like it was receiving too much attention from people who looked up to him in a way that was perhaps unnecessary.

“People used to be like 'IcyGamma doesn't play on servers, you must be fake' to me. People would start telling me how 'the real Icy' was suppose to act. Thats when I knew it had gone too far.” IcyGamma said. But this was crucial in his protest against RTB.

IcyGamma believed with the supporters and fans he had, he could use them to help spread the word and encourage people to demand RTB changes. A boycott even. Though after considering this, he realized it was a bad and unrealistic move. So instead, he decided to hit RTB where it hurt. With the failbin.

IcyGamma released a nicely made website called Winbin in July 2010. He filled it with well presented failed add-ons. These add-ons were all infamous for their errors and poor quality, but in very high demand. Though RTB attempted to get rid of them entirely. So IcyGamma appended each file so it would run in Blockland once more, and distributed them for free.

“Blocklanders love drama. So I posted the website link on a few mininuke videos on YouTube, and waited.” IcyGamma said. Sure enough, someone took the bait. Soon Winbin was posted on the Blockland forum, attracting thousands of views to the website, and sending file downloads skyrocketing.

IcyGamma was not only protesting against RTB by trying to reverse Ephialtes work. But he was also planning to utilize the traffic of the website for a future project. It was a win-win situation. Or so it seemed at first.

Some viewed IcyGamma's website as a malicious practice. An attack on Blockland, rather than RTB. MackTheHunter memorably wrote nothing more than, “oh fuck”.

“I believe anyone who does this sort of thing when the creator of the game clearly doesn't

want it done, should get their key revoked.” Heedicalking wrote. Heed witnessed Winbin's progress from its debut on the forums.

“People would say 'those files were failed for a reason' but the dumb fuckers never knew what reason it was. They were just suckups. They had no clue what they were talking about.” IcyGamma laughed. His passion for Winbin still existed even now. He was becoming excited over our voice chat on Skype.

Though IcyGamma did have support. Some praised him for doing it, marveling at his effort. A member from MicroBlock, SeventhSandwich, even said IcyGamma was not to blame as these files were always in the public domain anyway. And as people realized IcyGamma could not be banned for what he did, since it was offsite and he was not the one to post the link, those who witnessed it become either wary or impressed.

Though someone who was not impressed was Ephialtes. Upon seeing what IcyGamma had done, he removed IcyGamma's ability to use RTB services. He could no longer upload or maintain his add-ons, and could not download them in-game. He also could not see server information on the server list using RTB.

“I thought RTB was glitching at first, so I queried it with Ephialtes. He sent me an email saying I was banned for what I did.” IcyGamma wrote.

IcyGamma considered himself a protestor. But he was seen as a troublemaker. And in the end, Ephialtes felt that he had devalued his work and made a mockery of him. And thus an email argument exploded.

IcyGamma began to tweak RTB source to try and work around the ban. He managed to get so far, before realizing the obvious; the ban system was not entirely clientside. It was impossible.

“Ephialtes told me I was bluffing, and that he was only humoring this email conversation because he was bored and had spare time.

“I feel I annoyed him with what I wrote. And offended him. But he returned the favor. We argued into a sort of stalemate.” IcyGamma told me.

Ephialtes told him he had spoken to Badspot and encouraged him to slash IcyGamma's key. But Badspot was not interested in doing so. Yet.

“At first I felt like, wow, I can get away with this. But then I realized that my key was truly at risk, and that it only took Badspot to have a change of heart, or a step too far on my part, to have my key trashed. I was dangling by a string.” IcyGamma told me.

This insecurity got to him. A protest against RTB was not worth his key. Many of IcyGamma's fans saw his ID of 4127 to be as memorable as that of ID 0. And IcyGamma

lapped that up, of course.

IcyGamma soon relented. He admitted that the project was just as much of a viral stunt as it was his protest against RTB. The site closed up, and the discussion of it fizzled almost instantly. Though IcyGamma's point was still made.

“I like to think I helped raise the issue of RTB's mod system. It got talked about. And people still complain about it, especially developers. Ephi doesn't care about treating his users well, because there is no alternative.” IcyGamma explained. In the future, IcyGamma would end up supporting Kalphiter and his BC project due to his passion and willingness to stand up and try to make a change.

IcyGamma did what he thought was right. He didn't bandwagon. He didn't suck-up. He didn't backdown because of what people said. Few Blocklander's ever upheld this quality.

Chapter 11
Becoming Sheath

In August of 2010, a month after the Winbin stunt, IcyGamma was pining to be back on the forums. He wanted to release builds. He needed the traffic the website had.

IcyGamma was more curious as to how people would treat him, however. He wanted to see if people hated IcyGamma, or if it was his behavior that was actually the problem. For IcyGamma, in his typical way, would blame the forums inhabitants rather than himself. And so Sheath was born.

“We had moved a few times, changed Internet providers. So I had no issue with my IP being pinged. I made a new email, registered under a new name, and voila. I am back.” IcyGamma told me.

The name Sheath was of course a soft joke (don't ask your mother, kiddies). IcyGamma decided to create a much less crude image of himself though, using an avatar that had a Blockhead character standing inside a wheat sack.

For a while he posted generic messages. He was treated well. People appreciated him. IcyGamma felt vindicated that Blocklander's actually didn't hate him; they just hated the idea of who IcyGamma was and what he had done. But this lead him to slipping.

“I had been gone from the forum for about two years. I got curious and logged into my old account only to find it still banned. Worth a shot.” IcyGamma said. But this was a big mistake. His IP was now logged alongside Sheath.

In a matter of weeks, IcyGamma accidentally crossed Ephialtes in a topic. IcyGamma decided to play it safe, and he calmly disagreed with one of Ephialtes points. Ephialtes decided to run a check on Sheaths IP, finding it was IcyGamma.

“Ephialtes says nobody new to the site would disagree with him. This proved he was a power-mad psycho in my books. What kind of person runs an IP check on someone who chooses to disagree with something they say?” IcyGamma told me.

To IcyGamma, this was another one of Ephialtes strange displays of power-hungry madness. He felt Ephialtes was egotistical because he found it necessary to run an IP check on someone who disregards his opinion. Though you could say Ephi was clever and unable to be fooled, and managed to see through IcyGamma’s alt account. Icy certainly didn’t see it this way.

“As of that point I loathed Ephialtes. But I knew I was in the wrong anyway.” IcyGamma said.

Ephialtes would ban IcyGamma at the flick of a hat, so Icy prepared to be banished again. But after a week, he was still there.

“I figured maybe 2 years was enough of a ban. People had alts made in much shorter time periods. I was guilty of wanting to come back and nothing more.” IcyGamma ponders. Though Badspot was also to implement a new system of banning only weeks later, opting to use temporary bans more often than permanent ones. In time, IP bans would be abolished in favor of binding accounts to Blockland keys instead.

IcyGamma would be allowed to keep his Sheath account, but he would never get his IcyGamma account back again. However this would not be a problem after a few weeks. For word quickly spread about the alt, and IcyGamma would soon be easily associated with the name Sheath.

“It was great. I had fun posting for a while, then I remembered how people acted and soon I became the target of scathing comments and trolling once more.” IcyGamma explained. But he had been on a two year journey that had changed his way of thinking, posting, and perceiving the Internet and its users. He still maintained his belief of ethics, fairness, and humanity when posting online. But this would not compromise brutal honesty. IcyGamma viewed it as his way of giving tough love to people who he felt were too stupid to be reasoned with like adults.

Icy saw everyone at the forum as just another stupid kid thinking they were smart “because they found out a repetitive pattern of arguing”. He reserved his respect and appreciation for only a select few people who proved otherwise.

IcyGamma divided the forum into three sections. He wrote them out for me:

The general players, who came to talk Blockland, who often got caught up in arguments. The morons, the people who thought they were intelligent because they liked to argue a lot, who caused grief for many of the general players, hoping it makes them respected for whatever reason. And the veterans, the idiots who had played for so long, all they were interested in doing was inflicting their cocky and mislead views in the most offensive way possible(the vets usually don't even play Blockland anymore, they just forum whore). You know which group you belong to, people.

One thing is for sure. Sheath would be a well known fixture at the forum for the next two years. But he would not be favorable by many. For Icy felt he was not like the others at the forum, and he often looked down on other forum-goers for this very reason. Some people viewed this as an act of pompousness, but in reality, IcyGamma simply believed he did not fit in, and that his view of the forum was far more reasonable than most others. In time, some would learn to agree that IcyGamma's cynical view of the forum was right. But even so, the forum would never change. Because not everyone supported the belief that there was an issue, nor cared enough to do anything about it.

Chapter 12
Thereafter, ISeeGamma Productions

ISeeGamma Productions was the pseudo-brand IcyGamma began attributing to his videos as of his movie Blockmeadow which he released in early 2010. IcyGamma had gotten a friend to post the link to the forums to get view traffic going, and had released trailers and posted the movie on the Blockeye Entertainment website. But now he had the Sheath account, he could freely post his work.

On October of 2010, IcyGamma released his second feature movie. It was called "Thereafter".

"I was going to call it Hereafter but a real movie later stole the name. Proof that we had the name first is that my trailer for the Blockland movie came out way before the movie did. Tough luck, eh?" IcyGamma said.

Thereafter was a drama movie. It had a deep script about a man, Dennis Hubbard, who is diagnosed with cancer, already facing depression after having lost his daughter in a road accident long in the past.

It takes the viewer through a mysterious, abstract, depressing story based in a twisted, miserable depiction of the afterlife. Its a heavy and advance story line, perhaps inappropriate for a Blockland audience. Though its sincere and genuinely upsetting story line has received high praise, some even saying it was IcyGamma's best work at the time.

Blockland player Liquid, who saw the movie after it was released, commended IcyGamma on his brave choice of genre, though felt its dramatic content would be wasted on much of the forum.

For the most part, the movie was dubbed as "outstanding", "amazing", and even critics who watched the movie concluded that even with some flaws, overall "it was pretty good". Two viewers even admitted to tearing up at certain scenes; for a movie staged with lego-like figures, this was a great achievement for IcyGamma.

IcyGamma felt content. He had finally created something that was received well in the general consensus. In some sense, his work was done. He now felt he was done with creating long movies. Even his YouTube channel began to go silent.

In time, IcyGamma would end up deleting all of his old videos from pre-2011, except for Blockmeadow and Thereafter which were hosted on Vimeo instead of YouTube.

"I hated most of them. My editing ability was so good now, the old content was poor. Aside from that, it was a security threat. Too much of a digital footprint. My name was all over the videos." IcyGamma explained.

To his fans, deleting his videos during early 2011 was a painful shock. He had achieved over 451 subscribers, 148,127+ views, and had uploaded 77 videos at the time. Not bad. During this time that IcyGamma was working on Thereafter, he had learned that Blockintosh had been jumbled up and badly crumbled from its previous excellence.

“I learned that Mack let some idiot, Straton I believe, run his clan. This guy then gave it away to some other group.” IcyGamma said. While IcyGamma had his issues with Mack in the past, he had cooled off after two years of being able to mull it over. And as always, seeing a situation that was to him unethical and unfair made him rage.

Blockintosh had been given away by someone that didn't have the right to pass it on. Another group had taken the clan over, and destroyed it after running it poorly and half-merging its member base.

Mack was not around much. But he would end up running one of Blockland's most successful aviation-based clans while Blockintosh was in limbo.

IcyGamma eventually caught up with Mack in the future on a server. He spoke to him, and learned more of the story that occurred while he was absent. In short, Mack had lost the clan after trusting the wrong people. He ended up ousted, eerily similar to what happened to Steve Jobs, but under much less sinister circumstances. Mack had simply slipped from the group.

“It was strange. Mack told me he had become truly depressed. I found that odd. I had been terribly upset by MicroBlock crumbling, and my ban. But Mack took this to a whole new level that made me look at him differently.” IcyGamma explained.

To IcyGamma, Mack was always a weaker figure to him. He was likable, and he got on with people, so he could run a clan purely through from his friendly trait... at least thats how IcyGamma puts it.

“He couldn't deal with people well. He couldn't event well. I came to realize he was just a nice guy and nothing more. He was easy to exploit because of his forgiving nature.” IcyGamma said. As he spoke, he seemed less angry. It was as if he was going through all the motions of his Blockland experience.

Since meeting Mack that day, IcyGamma has viewed him as a person who is easy to walk all over, and who didn't care about hard work or refinement. Some may feel this is an outrageous and unfair claim about Mack, but IcyGamma was not interested in discussing it further.

With this new perception of Mack, IcyGamma felt ready to return to eventing. So a month before he had debuted his movie, he launched Ascii Events, a new clan that would return to the roots of the eventing world that he was ousted from, more than two years prior, and that

Mack had failed to deliver in (as far as Icy was concerned).

“I left for two years and the computer wave died. This is proof that my ideas and my eventing were core to the BLPC craze, and that no other clan apart from MicroBlock could have ever kept it going. As far as I was concerned, Blockintosh and iEvent had failed.” IcyGamma said.

Though Icy was more critical of Mack.

“Tom runs a great clan, because he is sincere and friendly. But Mack is now not likable. Mack is beyond his prime. He will never be able to run a clan like he used to. I say, get rid of the jerk.” IcyGamma told me.

Chapter 13
Blockland on Air

In September of 2010, on the 24th, IcyGamma released the first episode of Blockland on Air. His interest in media, previously emerging in the form of Blok, was returning.

“Blockland on Air was a podcast. I didn't know how long I'd do it for but, in the end we got about 3 episodes done.” IcyGamma said.

Blockland on Air was inspired by podcasts IcyGamma had seen in other communities. He felt that voice-to-voice interaction would let people see a more human, personal side to players, which is often lost when players interact solely through text on the forums.

“Sending a message to someone is cold and stressless. Thats why wimps break up with partners over mobile texts.

“This works the same in Blockland. When you start to talk to someone over voice chat, your mind starts to work more... socially? You think and respond differently to someone when you can hear their voice, understand their tone, and have more meaningful human contact with them.” IcyGamma explained.

He believed he could change the forum's perception of somebody simply by having them speak using their own voice.

The first guest IcyGamma wanted was Iban. Though ironically, IcyGamma and Iban had argued on the RTB forums before Icy was banned (the forum subsequently ended up being “closed” to some extent by Ephialtes) IcyGamma knew how people would treat Iban on the forum.

IcyGamma had a way of relating to people who were equally “outcast” from the community. In his view, he was outcast. While he believes everyone ends up the target of some form of online abuse, players like Kalphiter, Iban, and even himself tend to end up as high-profile players who are mutually attacked for their involvement in projects and their attitudes on the forums. In other words, IcyGamma believes it takes a certain type to be singled out; usually those that fight back and speak up.

“I went to his server, talked it over to him, and he seemed suspicious but he agreed. I mean, we have the father of the cityRPG right here.” IcyGamma said.

The pair had an interview over Skype. IcyGamma wasted no time talking about cityRPG and Iban's drama.

“It was fun. Iban and I even talked for a little bit afterwards. He wanted to chat again off the record but, it never happened for some reason.” IcyGamma said.

The pair even talked about how drama had affected their online experience.

“I think we're all guilty of bandwagoning at some point.

“Its just how gossip works, you know?” Iban memorably said during the interview, when IcyGamma complained he was often targeted by random players.

IcyGamma then convinced Kalphiter to do an interview about his drama for episode 2. It wasn't easy.

“Convincing him to do it was a bitch. Then I had to wake up at like, 6AM and wait for an hour to sync with his time zone so I could do the interview. I literally sat there in pajamas talking to him haha.

“Kalphiter used a script. He pre-wrote it, then recorded the lines twice with me over live chat. He was stressed. Really stressed.” IcyGamma recalls.

“I was stressed too. I was intimidated by Kalphiter. It was a very uncomfortable conversation.”

Kalphiter was indeed accused of “sounding like a robot” due to his tense behavior and scripted responses. But IcyGamma didn't mind.

“I don't care. He answered my questions, he came onto the show. It was great.” IcyGamma said.

IcyGamma also interviewed MYST that episode. But people started to realize how the guests sounded high-pitched. Why was everyone sounding so strange?

“Funny story. Everyone said Iban, MYST, and even Kalphiter sounded oddly high pitched. Turns out my sound card was doing something weird... it appeared to be raising the pitch of their voices.” IcyGamma explains. But it was too late to do anything by then. Though IcyGamma always felt bad by this technical error.

“It was my job to take care of them when they gave an interview, and make them sound as good as possible. And I fucked up. I respected my guests hugely, and I had just disrespected them by making them sound like chipmunks.”

Scout31, a programmer IcyGamma got to know in Blockland, designed an in-game client that allowed users to download and listen to podcasts. IcyGamma was very thankful and promoted the mod to his listeners. Though its practical use wouldn't last long.

IcyGamma did a final episode (episode three) with four players at once. Jenxas (Ascii member) TomTheGeek (iEvent owner and close friend of Mack) Kyzor (a player who

would soon end up being the lead role in The Taking of Isar Tower and being well respected by IcyGamma) and Maxwell (a well known player in the community).

“I hosted a public Teamspeak server. The first 4 players to get in would be the guests. First in, first served.” IcyGamma said.

He explains how he is amazed how Kyzor got in, and he didn't even realize it until now.

“Wow, Kyzor got in for the interview? Jesus. Thats creepy.” IcyGamma said.

Icy didn't realize this was going to be the last interview, but it had to be.

“Life was filled with complications at the time. I also had a sound card that fucked up my guests voices. I was being hassled by everyone to do interviews. And frankly, I was so socially nervous I would often feel sick before talking to people. It was too much.” IcyGamma admits.

Chapter 14
Ascii Events & The Canterbury Earthquake Strike 1

Ascii Events was a slick clan. Its logo was minimal and well made. The topic had the style that Blockintosh had. The group had the hosting power of multiple members. It was a success from the start.

“It all started with the help of a member who joined the clan and hosted for me. From then on, we got others to host, and I hosted as well. Ascii started to grow. We quickly had a wonderful team of 10 players. I wanted no more.” IcyGamma told me.

He didn't want a big group of thirty again. A small group of ten was all he felt was necessary.

“10 people is all you need. Anymore and it gets unmanageable. I like to have small dedicated teams that will last, not massive groups that need to be pruned constantly.” IcyGamma explained his thinking.

But IcyGamma did not start the topic. For on the 4th of September at about 4:35AM, IcyGamma was woken up to a violent 7.1 magnitude earthquake, at 10km deep (6.2 miles).

“I woke up to a rumbling. Thought it was a dream, so I drank a sip of water and laid back down. Then it hit. Turns out that was the foreshock.

“I was tossed around on my bed. Doors open and closed violently, banging by themselves. Things were thrown out of cupboards, smashing to the floor. Then the lights flickered, and I was blinded into the dark.” IcyGamma recalls the quake, saying the roar of the quake sounded like an airliner had landed on his roof-- it was deafening.

The movement was violent. Very violent. IcyGamma was nearer the fault, in a place that felt the movement more strongly than other parts of the region.

“I live in a family of five. I ran into the dark and met with other members of my family. I had siblings of no older than 3 and 7 at the time. We got under the table and waited. It was unreal, crazy, horrifying. I thought the city would be in total tatters.” IcyGamma says. The quake went on for 40 seconds, though IcyGamma says it felt like a lifetime.

The water was polluted with sewerage. Power and phone was out for two days. It was a life changing time.

Though damage to the city center was minimal. In turns out, the city center had half of the shaking intensity than the area IcyGamma was in. Though there were still some buildings

damaged, and liquefaction and flooding hit some suburbs. But nobody died, and that was a relief.

IcyGamma was gone for a few weeks to recover from the traumatic event, which happened on that fateful Saturday morning. But soon, he was able to launch Ascii as things began to go back to normal. However, he would be regularly living through aftershocks (earthquakes that come after a main event due to disruption of the ground) which would range from a magnitude of between 3.0 to 5.8 in magnitude and be no shallower than 20 KM. On some days, there would be up to three earthquakes a day of around 4.0 in magnitude. It was a nerve-shattering time.

“It was scary, and it was hard, and it still is hard. Most people don't understand. Even those who felt the recent earthquakes in America have no clue, because the quakes there were laughable in comparison. Though any quake is scary.” IcyGamma tells me.

Even as 2012 comes along, the city is still affected by regular shakes and rumbles from smaller earthquakes (though they are smaller and less persistent). It is a historical event that happens every few hundred years. For Icy, it was a coincidence to have been there for it.

IcyGamma announced the Ascii clan on the 25th of September 2010. It was a quiet announcement, with most of the discussion coming from existing members that were established before the topic, or from players who had heard of the clan and were already preparing apps. It wasn't the launch IcyGamma wanted. It was unimpressively low-key. Nobody seemed to care.

But that didn't hurt IcyGamma's efforts. He released a television that played video bricks, using entirely default events and bricks, as an effort to get back into eventing cool projects. Badspot would eventually add this video to his favorites, so it was visible on his channel for promotion of Blockland.

IcyGamma was now very knowledgable of events. He had perfected his craft since the day events were released, and had an interest in using them that far exceeded most people. He was also becoming very competent at VCE and variables after having the time and patience to go through them.

“I remember Zack0Wack0, the creator of VCE, having shown me the first version of his mod during the MicroBlock days. I was impressed, but even I didn't realize how big it would become.

“Zack0Wack0 is a clever guy, thats for sure. He contributed to events in his own special way by using his knowledge of Torque. His work gave people like me the tools to make some really mind-blowing stuff.” IcyGamma said.

Zack0Wack0 had given him a demonstration in those days. But however impressed IcyGamma was, he didn't immediately gel with VCE as he eventually would. It would take

a couple of years before he finally focused in on the system.

IcyGamma was to start working with VCE to create evented builds during his days running Ascii. While building a prototype of the Ascii HQ, IcyGamma began to create a power system. It would draw power from a generator that created watts (or 'blotts' as he made them) by exploding pong projectiles. Each explosion created a blott. If there were blotts in the generator, you could then turn lamps and other electronics on. A lamp would delete about three blotts every five seconds.

“It sounds like an easy concept. But it wasn't. The VCE system required a very specific way to setup the variable, have it checked and subtracted from, and needed a certain way to stop it from going into the negative values by accident. It wasn't as easy as people think. It wasn’t as easy as I thought either.” IcyGamma said.

It took him a couple of days to get a perfect system, but he did it. This system inspired IcyGamma. He always wanted to have his own tower in Blockland, but he wanted it built realistically. With a steel skeleton like real towers, and with wiring and electricity. Now he could do this.

Chapter 15
Isar Tower

IcyGamma took his idea for a power system and began construction the tower he had always imagined in Blockland. It would be a place where users could meet, hang out, and play with interactive events. IcyGamma wanted to build a restaurant on the top floor, create an office as his official private headquarters, and have floors with apartments where people could build their own rooms. He wanted an interactive automated bar where people could buy drinks and chat. He wanted a pool and spa complex. He wanted an art gallery. He wanted a lot in this building. And for the most part, he'd do it.

He named the tower Isar. This name originated from a medieval RP, where IcyGamma was asked to choose a more realistic name; he chose 'Isar Gammar'.

The tower was not only unique in concept, but also in style. It would be a large, square, bullet-shaped tower that stood on a concrete pad above the water in Slate Ocean. It was symmetrical and looked the same from every side (apart from the entrance doors on the ground level).

“I built it by hand. It was my own personal labor of love haha.” IcyGamma laughed.

The build started online, with players watching as he constructed the outside skeleton of the building.

“Isar has an outside frame, that holds the top of the building to the concrete pad below. The floors on the inside of the tower are all held up by themselves. If it was real lego, you could literally lift the roof and the sides off of Isar in one piece.” IcyGamma said. He then couldn't help but crack a joke.

“I guess you could say it was like a sheath.” he said, not only referencing his forum name, but also taking a crack at the shape of the tower which was sometimes mocked due to its likeliness to male genitalia, after appearing in the series 'The Taking of Isar Tower' that IcyGamma would end up making (more on that later).

Isar Tower took a few weeks to build. The top of the tower was totally restructured to create an amazing interior for The Black Pearl, the restaurant in the top of the building. It had two levels, all open planned and connected using overhangs, with a beautifully made chandelier in the center of the room. Everything was black and white. It was striking, elegant, and well designed for the small space.

“It was really elegant and wonderful. I put such effort into it. And I proudly displayed it to others.” IcyGamma said.

He also had an art gallery finished on a lower floor. He debuted a friends new add-ons there

for people to see, then sent them upstairs to celebrate the release of the add-ons with evented drinks, that would disappear after four clicks of the glass.

The tower became well known. IcyGamma memorably gave it the slogan “more than just a build” to try and emphasis the amazing event systems and the element of roleplay users engaged in.

Everyday he would host the build. People came to build their rooms (on one of two floors) until eventually all were given away.

“More people demanded more rooms, but I said no. People were confusing Isar for a hotel which aggravated me.” IcyGamma explained.

This success got the tower attention from the wrong types. Others began hosting broken versions of the tower they sad stolen, which caused immediate issues for IcyGamma's project. His protective spirit kicked into action, and he started banning people who attempted to re-host his build. He also created a long list of ways for players to detect whether or not the Isar Tower they were at was the real one or the fake one.

But at this point, IcyGamma was too busy to focus on these issues. He wanted to have a party at the Black Pearl. He prepared to host a big event.

“It was meant to debut the Black Pearl properly. So I decided to host a VIP event.” IcyGamma said.

He posted a topic to get publicity, and invited several guests. Lord Tony, Kalphiter, Greekgeeker, Tape, Zack0Wack0, Beachbum, and DrenDran. It was staged for the 28th November.

Photo of the guests after the meal.

Guests would be treated to a three course meal. They got to choose one of two meals for each course, which IcyGamma would event from scratch in the kitchen, then dupe into the dining room.

IcyGamma also saved one slot for anyone on the forum to get a chance to be part of the VIP event.

“People posted if they wanted to join, and then a website online randomly generated one of the names. They would be the winner, and it was Sitrus. Though sadly, he never turned up.” IcyGamma laughed.

IcyGamma also got one of his friends (a clan member from Ascii) Jenxas to come and help serve the guests.

The night was stressful for IcyGamma, but equally just as fun. Beachbum and Greekgeeker ended up not showing up to the event due to various reasons, however the rest of the guests enjoyed their unique experience.

“It was the coolest thing I've ever done in Blockland. I felt proud, as silly as that may sound. I really loved that those guys joined me at the tower and got into it.” IcyGamma said.

He fondly recalls Zack0Wack0 sitting down to eat.

“I served him some food, but I broke the VCE events. I wanted to impress him but messed up. Luckily, a tour of my generator made up for that... I hope.” IcyGamma laughs.

The only guest that didn't cooperate was Kalphiter. IcyGamma made a special appeal to get Kalphiter to join, as despite his drama within the community, he had an appreciation for Kalphiter and his persistence to fight against those that tried to bring his efforts down.

“I liked Kalphiter. I wanted him to join Isar and feel appreciated as he seemed to have a hard time with the rest of the community.

“Kalphiter decided to instead fuck around outside of the tower. I had to kick him to shut him up. Even then, he didn't sit down or have a meal. I strongly believe he just didn't know how to react to what we were doing.” IcyGamma said.

IcyGamma wondered if Kalphiter's behavior had been worsened by the community, and if “he had been worn down to the point he knew no better than to awkwardly jump around and be a bit of a troll.”

The next event of Isar would be New Years, as December rolled around. Christmas was going to be special with a light display on the building, but Icy had hosting issues and never got around to doing it.

For New Years eve, IcyGamma evented lights and music inside the Black Pearl. It would be a party. He also setup a firework display. When midnight hit in New York, the fireworks would set off. Two players from New York came to celebrate the New Year at Isar.

On the day of the party, IcyGamma visited Kalphiter's New Years eve party to witness the event for another time zone. For IcyGamma it was already the 1st of January. Kalphiter was doing it for multiple time zones, so IcyGamma had plenty of time to wait before it was his turn to host the event at Isar.

“Kalphiters New Years eve party was one of those things that if you missed, you will really regret. People will talk about it in the future. I've never been to a place with so many people. It was just sensational.” IcyGamma said, fondly recalling the time there.

After the party at Kalphiter’s, IcyGamma later hosted his. It was a small gathering, but a nice time all the same. The firework display went off perfectly (apart from a bit of lag activating it) and the event was posted on the Isar topic. IcyGamma took a photo of everyone at the New Years eve party who stayed after the firework display, and took a photo of the fireworks setting off outside of Isar to post (these images are visible at the end of the final episode of The Taking of Isar Tower after the credit sequence).

Though it was not as successful as Icy had hoped. A player he had previously banned for harassment visited the server under a new name. IcyGamma had cleared his ban list by accident hours before. His name was GammerMunchy, and he was known to have used the name LcyGamma to impersonate Icy. IcyGamma saw the firework pads on the server preview image and knew someone had taken the newest version.

“I remember him at the server. He just sat there at a table and didn't speak. He'd sometimes look at me and turn his head if I walked past him, it was creepy.” IcyGamma recalls. Gammer was actually saving Isar Tower to his saves folder. And he would soon host it against IcyGamma's wishes, being the first to steal the new Isar with the completed Black Pearl.

“When I found out, I was livid. He was posing as me, stealing traffic from my server, and hosting a broken Isar that looked like utter shit. I wanted to kill him.” IcyGamma said.

At first he didn't know who it was, but soon he put a name to the face after starting drama topics to find the suspect. Some criticized his decision to make such a fuss, but to IcyGamma this was important to him. He was protective, and as usual, confident his decision was right and unwilling to listen to the “moaning and bitching” of the forum. And sure enough, he had supporters as well.

It would take months of tracking down the user, getting the word out, and talking to the impersonator before the ordeal was over. In time, GammerMunchy would agree to stop and even apologized to Icy and tried to give him something in return.

IcyGamma convinced him to stop when he said the following: “You are just trying to be somebody else, and its getting you hated. Don't waste your key making yourself look like a moron. Be yourself, create your own projects, and make your own friends. Be part of the community, we want to see the real GammerMunchy.”

This story would eventually be used as the base for a series IcyGamma would create in 2011, named The Taking of Isar Tower.

Chapter 16
Afterblock

IcyGamma had been working on a program called AfterBlock in his spare time. It was designed to be a Blockland-themed interface with tools like brick makers, server editors, add-on packagers, and fun games to play while you wait for servers to load.

It was announced prior to Platnium Blockland, which IcyGamma always felt stole AfterBlock's concepts. Though Tyler66, the developer of Platnium, denied this.

“I wasn't worried. Tyler has no design sense, and didn't have the skill or the means to pull off what I wanted to do with AfterBlock.” IcyGamma said.

AfterBlock was released one day in January of 2011 after a slow and frustrating period of rushed beta testing.

There was a release party on Gentoo's server at a club Gentoo had built for his Ocular radio project. IcyGamma sometimes hung out at his server prior to releasing AfterBlock, listening to Gentoo and his crew Djing on the systems they had built with events.

“Gentoo and his server was cool. But he got attached to me after a while because I started to promote his event. I think he had a hidden agenda.” IcyGamma speculated.

IcyGamma liked Gentoo's concept, and his use of eventing.

No	Yes	TomTheGeek's Afterblock partayyy	218	3	/ 32	8070	Destruct	No
No	Yes	Iban's CityRPG AfterBlock.com	331	8	/ 16	31446	Slate CityRPG	No
No	Yes	Dephurites' Afterblock.com Release	335	1	/ 32	0	Slate	No
No	Yes	DrenDran's TDM Build + Afterblock	336	6	/ 32	1776	Slate Snow	No
No	No	Gentoo's AfterBlock.com Release	363	5	/ 32	2825	Destruct	No
No	No	TheToxicRadio's AfterBlock.com Release	367	2	/ 16	1873	Construct - Blue, Neutr	No
No	No	Muffin's Afterblock.com Realease	478	1	/ 20	993	Slate Lunar	No
No	No	Sord213's Afterblock.com Release	965	2	/ 16	115190	Bedroom	No
No	Yes	IcyGamma's AfterBlock.com release	---	0	/ 8	1	Bedroom	No

A

Photo of users joining in on the server wide party. January 2010.

To release AfterBlock, IcyGamma posted a topic getting people to set their server names to “AfterBlock release party” so there would be a server wide event of players who would see the name and get the program. It was a clever plan.

“Gentoo was in, so I visited his party and his place became the official area for it. It was fun.” IcyGamma said.

IcyGamma eventually closed the AfterBlock website after it was targeted with spamming and abused. AfterBlock would not reach version 2.0 due to an event in February that stole his time. An event that would change his life...

Chapter 17
The Canterbury Earthquake Strike 2

As 2011 came along and the year went on, Ascii continued its course and Isar Tower continued to be constructed. But as February emerged, things went wrong.

On the 22nd of February IcyGamma bussed into the city center of Christchurch city to get to his school. By lunch, he learned the teachers were striking in the afternoon.

“I was playing the piano for a bit, I looked at the time. I decided I should leave, I had an urgency to get to my teacher so I could ask to go home. Didn't want to miss him or I'd be stuck at the school doing stupid activities for a few hours while teachers went on strike.

“I got to my teacher, signed the forms I had to so I could leave for the rest of the day, then left the building.” IcyGamma said. The school was a five floor tower, in the heart of the city.

IcyGamma stopped to get some candy, then waited for his bus. After he got on, he gazed out the window waiting to be home. But three quarters of the way to his house, as the bus pulled up to a shopping mall, people began to run into the streets. The bus began to shake, and the driver slammed the breaks.

“It was an earthquake. I stood up and watched as people ran into the road. The street signs were swaying like they were in water. It was gobsmacking.

“At first I thought, haha, my friends in town would have felt that. Then I learned buildings had collapsed.” IcyGamma recalled.

Indeed, the city centered had just been ravaged. Shops had collapsed, offices had toppled, cars and buses had been crushed. Hundreds had been killed. A second earthquake measuring 6.1 magnitude had hit under the city at a shallow depth. The vertical movement was extremely strong. His school was okay, but it was in the center of the devastation.

“My father thought I was dead after seeing the dust cloud rise from the city center and hearing the stories of chaos. When he realized I had left the city just 40 minutes before it happened, he was relieved.

“It took him hours to come home in the traffic. When he got home, I went up to him and we just hugged. We didn't speak.” IcyGamma recalled.

Even now, the city is still closed off. Much of it was demolished, and is still being demolished. IcyGamma said he couldn't put into words the feeling of having gone through such a terrible ordeal, or what its like to have your city destroyed and your life altered forever. But for a while, he was different on Blockland. Understandably, awful to be around.

But this would be a turning point for IcyGamma. For people posted comments mocking him and the earthquake.

“People joked about those that died. People made light of the quake, said it was nothing, even though our city was brought to rubble and many people's lives were ruined or taken.” IcyGamma explained how after reading the comments, he was utterly disgusted.

He wasn't alone. Even those that may not have supported IcyGamma in the past were horrified at the tasteless jokes being posted about the disaster. This was not internet trolling. It crossed the line. It was simply not funny, and downright wrong. But two messages in particular got to IcyGamma.

“A player named (Hit Man) said it was a disappointment I wasn't injured by bricks, and therefore hurt or killed.” IcyGamma told me.

He says this was the worst thing anyone has ever said to him, and that he was shocked somebody could joke about the very real possibility of him being hurt. After all, busses were crushed around the city killing people.

“I can forgive everyone on Blockland for what they have said to me in the past. But never (Hit Man). I lost faith in people after reading that.” IcyGamma said. Being hurt by the tasteless comment was a reasonable reaction.

The topic began to die as people revolted against what was being said.

“To quote what I told someone else, 'Its like telling someone who left the World Trade Center before the plane hit that they should have stayed a little longer',” IcyGamma said.

The February quake would prove to be one of the most damaging disasters in New Zealand history, and was internationally acknowledged, requiring help from other countries to recover. To this day, the city is still nowhere near being repaired. Much of it is still being demolished, despite round the clock work.

But another comment disappointed IcyGamma. It was by MackTheHunter, who said “such a shame only 35 people died”. In the end Mack got what “he wanted” as hundreds of bodies would be found or unaccounted for.

“Mack proved he is a senseless, heartless, pathetic cunt. I regret having ever met him after reading that comment.” IcyGamma raged. He says sometimes, he wishes he never launched his BLPC or made MicroBlock, because he knew then that Blockintosh wouldn't have been. He was spiteful. It was a strange reaction, but given the circumstances, understandable.

“I hope people read this, and realize how much of a total waste of space Mack really is. I'm glad TomTheGeek took over Blockintosh, because Mack has a worser history of running clans than I do.” IcyGamma laughed.

Chapter 18
The Blockland Bulletin

Long before AfterBlock, Ascii, and just after Blockland on Air, IcyGamma had created a blog called The Blockland Bulletin.

It was a news blog. Its purpose was to report on events at servers, on the forums, and around Blockland. It was meant to be written like a real news paper, creating a mock-realistic feel that IcyGamma had always enjoyed applying to his projects.

“It was suppose to be a novelty, fun blog for people to read when they were bored.” IcyGamma explained.

The blog launched on the 7th of December 2010, but only after the February earthquakes in 2011 did IcyGamma have the free time to really start blogging with it, after being forced to work at home due to his school being off-limits.

“We did a lot of stories. About servers, scandals, mods, forum events, updates. Even the times when Blockland’s master server would glitch, we'd be there with 'breaking news' spreading the word and updating on the situation. It was good fun.” IcyGamma explains.

Icy had been studying journalism and media studies for a year at highschool. He had worked with journalists and been mentored by one, in order to learn more about it as a potential future career. Now he wanted to test out certain skills and techniques using a Blockland audience.

“The Blockland Bulletin had a dark side. Sometimes I intentionally wrote nasty things to see the reaction. I did this when I was learning about journalism ethics. I wanted to see what happens if you break certain rules you are advised not to.” IcyGamma admits.

The Blockland Bulletin now had a hidden agenda. IcyGamma was using its readers as test subjects for his school projects. He was attempting to learn about writing for an audience, dealing with complaints, and standards and procedures to follow for interviews and reviews.

“I never posted lies. Everything on the blog was genuine, or quoted from a source. But sometimes, I did twist the angle of the story to be more outrageous than it was. But thats what you do in journalism, right?” IcyGamma laughed.

Not everyone appreciated the blog. Ephialtes dubbed it a “tabloid” after it focused on scandal, especially with RTB. IcyGamma memorably once posted a photo of Hitler, with the Nazi symbol replaced with Ephialtes avatar. IcyGamma laughs about it now, though admits it was crossing the line.

“Some people didn't get the blog. It was suppose to be fun, unique, tongue-in-cheek. It was suppose to be informative, but equally a novelty.” IcyGamma says.

Indeed, there were players who said it was unnecessary and silly to create a “serious news blog” for Blockland. But IcyGamma always denies this was the focus.

“From the start it was meant to be fun and a bit silly. It was mock-serious. The use of strict journalism was suppose to amuse the reader; its like looking into an alternative universe where everything is lego, and the media have little to do then report on players using penis bricks.” IcyGamma laughs, referring to a penis mod that became a popular three-article feature.

“Anyone who didn't get it was just a narrow-minded idiot. It was only the uncreative forum trolls that ever had issue with the bulletin. That and the people that were targeted by it.” IcyGamma tells me.

The blog did indeed start targeting specific players. One incident took the cake.

“Zack0Wack0, the creator of VCE who I respected at the time, came to me with ex-MicroBlock member Truce. They spoke out loud about some 'hacking' attempt.” IcyGamma explains.

From the start, this was suspicious. The pair joined the server, and began their own separate, random discussion about hacking. IcyGamma could tell they wanted his attention.

“You can stop it now.” IcyGamma said to them while in the server. He argued they were lying so he would post wrongful material, but they denied it. So IcyGamma decided to write an article that, rather than revealing their so called 'hacking discovery' spoke about Zack0 and Truce making improvable claims.

“That way I could report on the situation, and if it was a total setup, it'd just make them look stupid because I never verified in the article that it was true. In fact, I wrote how there was no evidence.”

Indeed, the story was a sham. But Zack0Wack0 turned on IcyGamma, trying to argue that “Icy was such an attentionwhore he published it.” This didn't work however. In fact, it backfired.

“People said Zack0Wack0 was stupid for saying that my decision to post rumors was me craving attention. He was exposed for being a malicious twit.” IcyGamma said over Skype. To this day, he never understood why Zack0Wack0 did that.

Zack0Wack0 since made a blog dedicated to degrading The Blockland Bulletin, though he only posted one entry.

“When I found that, I realized how much of a child Zack0 was. He got himself into trouble, then blamed the blog. And worst of all, like every idiot who revolted again the bulletin, he believed the blog was trying to be a real media outlet.” IcyGamma said.

The drama didn't stop there. Some would often accuse IcyGamma of pretending to be a professional journalist, to which he would always respond, taking it in his stride: “Anyone can be a journalist online. Being a professional would mean I'd have to be a qualified, hired writer. I'm working on it.”

At one point the bulletin decided to extend its author base. IcyGamma had about four players come and go on the staff team. Most notably a player named Killer2 joined the bulletin during 2010 and would make an impact of sorts.

“Killer2 only just got his application accepted to be an author. And when he wrote articles, he didn't maintain the quality he originally had.” IcyGamma said.

Killer2 began to get lazy with editing and quality. IcyGamma had to warn him on two occasions to pickup the speed. But it was when he started to fabricate information, issues emerged.

“He wrote some false information about IPv6 changes. I got about 5 complaints and had to delete the article.”

“Killer2 didn't like me doing that, I don't think. But he eventually accepted it. Though his heart must have no longer been in the project, because eventually he no longer kept his role after failing to make any decent contributions.” IcyGamma recalls.

The Killer2 situation was uncomfortable for IcyGamma. He did not enjoy dealing with him, and it made him realize that without constant observation over material his authors posted, IcyGamma could not properly do his editing job. He lost trust in allowing others to post there.

“He was a good guy but he isn't blogger material. But he helped me realize that adding more authors was a bad idea.” IcyGamma concluded.

The Blockland Bulletin ran till November, its total operation lasting just under a year. The blog would have 126 articles, many of them written by IcyGamma (about 11 articles a month). It would have just under 36,000 views (which IcyGamma finds to be a very good amount for a Blockland website) and 350 comments.

“I love that site. I think its great. I'd keep at it if I wasn't running out of time with work and school.” IcyGamma said.

Chapter 19
LateralWorks

IcyGamma periodically created an eventing brand called LateralWorks. This was to be used with very finely made non-computer builds. In particular, IcyGamma was working on creating a digital piano.

“I really wanted to make a fine instrument.” IcyGamma explained.

IcyGamma built the piano using a custom sound pack, and used VCE to create an extremely complex memory system, that would record what the user plays, and allow them to play it back with auto-timing.

“It was a complex system. The user had to be able to press one of any 44 keys in any order, and the memory system had to receive that information and remember it.” IcyGamma explained.

Icy first designed the memory system on paper, then spent a whole week (hours a day) making and refining the system. It grew so large, he had to edit the save with Notepad.

“In the end it used over 13,000 events, most of them lines of VCE. It was a monster.” IcyGamma said. To this day, he believes it to be the best eventing work he has ever done.

“To an idiot, its just a piano. To anyone with a brain, its an amazing feat of eventing, with perhaps the best memory system ever made in Blockland.” IcyGamma said.

Apart from a memory system with record and playback, the piano also had realistic grand piano sounds, sustain mode, and a sharply made case. For some, the mere amount of events blew them away.

LateralWorks also produced a pianola (player piano) that could read custom piano rolls. It came with the Maple Leaf rag by Scott Joplin, although the piano could not keep time very well and it did not take off for such reasons. In fact, the Maple Leaf rag song was extremely out of time and played very slowly.

LateralWorks did not make many new builds afterwards.

Chapter 20
MicroBlock 2011 & IceCube A2

IcyGamma had started to spend time at the iEvent server with TomTheGeek. Though he originally did not respect Tom or his clan, he was starting to appreciate Tom's dedication to his group.

"By this time Mack had long since lost Blockintosh and it had basically fizzled into non-existence.

"Tom and I spoke a lot about this. Tom said things about Mack, some of them flattering and others a bit rude. We bitched about him, or at least I did, for a bit." IcyGamma laughs.

IcyGamma would sometimes play pranks on Tom in the iEvent HQ where he would hang around a lot. One day he changed the events to all of the JVS doors so when pressed they would wildly open and close, going out of control, and killing players who tried to run through.

On another occasion he had messed around with the iEvent clock so its hour, minute, and seconds were in the wrong order.

Perhaps the most memorable, IcyGamma created a lag bomb by chopping off a small section of Tom's office (it had a long and narrow area that was empty) and filling it with bricks that would fire pong projectiles and relays. He then closed the wall up so it was almost impossible to see the source, and left a letter on his desk that would set it off.

"Tom found it funny. He was a great guy like that. I could hide traps in the HQ and screw with his office, and he just went along with it. I'd have never been very happy if someone did that to me, so I found him really pleasant to get along with." IcyGamma fondly recalls.

This bond lasted for a few weeks, up until Tom one day invited IcyGamma to step into his office.

He walked in and saw an old MicroBlock IcyDesktop 1001 computer. TomTheGeek had salvaged it from an old save he found online, and had told Icy he was collecting them.

"It touched me in a weird sense. There was my old work, looking outdated and half broken, sitting in his office on display." IcyGamma recalls. He was so amazed by this, that he even offered to restore the 1001 to function correctly.

"The colorset was off, and the events were broken due to how old it was and how many versions a go it was made.

"It was v19 when I was in his office, the build was made 10 versions prior. It was stunning."

IcyGamma explained.

After 15 minutes of fixing the build, it was in fresh working order. IcyGamma thanked Tom for the opportunity, and even discussed starting MicroBlock again. Tom had inspired him and re-ignited his interest in eventing by re-uniting him with his original work.

IcyGamma asked TomTheGeek to ally iEvent with MicroBlock on launch. He wanted support from the beginning. Tom agreed. And with that, MicroBlock was back nearly three years after it had suffered a sudden death.

“Its funny because Mack nagged me to start MicroBlock again about a year prior, I told him to quit living in the past.” IcyGamma laughs.

It would be 24 hours before MicroBlock relaunched. It was a strange and exciting time. But MicroBlock would quickly gain nine players, IcyGamma extending the memberlist to no more than fifteen to keep up with any possible demand.

An old friend of IcyGamma's who helped him build version two of his popular snore emote mod, Slicksilver555, joined the group and allowed IcyGamma to use his services to host a 24/7 dedicated server.

“He offered me free hosting, using a service similar to the one that Kalphiter eventually offered. It was hosted under my name, not his. I'll love him forever for that.” IcyGamma said.

Another friend of IcyGamma's, named Emo_Freak who later became Tenshi, also joined MicroBlock. The three were pretty close friends with each other.

“Tenshi was a friend to me like Noruzenchi was. He reminded me of him.” IcyGamma said.

“Although Slick was different. Slick and I often argued about computer hardware or our opinions on software. It was fun to challenge him at first.”

IcyGamma then spent the next month hand crafting a headquarters for MicroBlock. It would have several buildings on the grounds, though IcyGamma only ever made four of them.

There was the MicroBlock hotel, a half finished multi-story hotel complex for visitors from other clans to hang out in. There was the Icecube, a large transparent green-house styled building in the central area of the grounds. Then there was the Slate building, a large rectangular single story building, that housed office rooms and had abstractly long brown corridors, and a large meeting room in the middle. On the other side, the Centipede building was created. It was a two story building just as long as the Slate building, but it had a big open entrance hall with a high ceiling and an overhang to get upstairs. It had many glass windows, and long, insect-like columns curving out of the roof and stretching down to the ground (hence its name). Inside there was a massive room that looked like an aircraft hanger

where prototypes of computers would be made and IcyGamma would often build and test event ideas. Next door in the building was an un-used presentation room, and above that a ROM storage room where computers lay idle that could control the screen.

IcyGamma had worked on a few ideas for a new computer, but none of them ever came to being finished. Until one day Icy invited Slick into the Centipede hanger to show him a new concept.

Using a layer of print bricks in front on a pixel screen, IcyGamma was able to engineer a 3D styled interface. He also discovered brick animation, like fading when using the disappear event, didn't work when the prints where in front.

“By combining this with rendering, we were able to make windows appear on screen instantly, rather than fade in, creating a more realistic electronic feel.” IcyGamma told me.

IcyGamma had just created the most complex screen in Blockland to date. He demo'd it to Slicksilver, who was intrigued.

The biggest issue was its size. Slick and Icy endearingly referred to it as the CRT screen of Blockland due to its thickness, requiring a depth of three bricks to achieve the desired effect.

“Unlike the original pixel screens which needed a depth of only 1 brick, we had just tripled the need for space. The whole concept of LCD had just gone out of the window to us.” IcyGamma said.

IcyGamma made a few designs but couldn't get anything right at the server. So he then went offline into single player, and designed a computer based off Apple's iMac G3.

Originally it was going to be much bigger, but IcyGamma managed to engineer the design to be 2x bricks smaller. The challenge was now how to put the internals in.

“I'd say 95% of the A2 computer is the case and the screen. The hardware itself is smaller than even the keyboard, respectably.” IcyGamma explained.

Icy had devised the perfect shape, but he would now have to fit all the programs and hardware bricks into a 1x2 space.

“I made Blockland's smallest computer ever. Just I paired it with Blockland's biggest screen.” IcyGamma laughs. Indeed, IcyGamma had managed to make two advance, interactive programs, plus the 'firmware', and the controller bricks, in the space of 1x2. He placed it below the screen.

“Its a feat of good eventing.” IcyGamma compliments his own work.

IcyGamma also created a new system he kept secret. He had figured out the key to making a computer that could run custom programs.

“I once said it was impossible. I proved myself wrong.” IcyGamma says.

IcyGamma had created a system of variables for detecting what keys were pressed. Using this, he could make custom programs on bricks detect what was being pressed on the computer, so it could operate without needing extra hardware. And it worked.

MicroBlock released the A2 on September 15th 2011. It was a lavish topic. And IcyGamma was proud of it.

“I'd created the first computer that could read custom programs flawlessly and easily, and created the first computer to have a 3D screen with what I called 'instant graphics',” IcyGamma explains.

Like with the term BLPC, IcyGamma wanted to create a name for custom programs to filter out people who were stealing his work.

“I chose ROM. People kept calling custom programs CDs, which I found wrong, because these bricks weren’t round. ROM sounded rad anyway.” IcyGamma said.

IcyGamma ended up developing an image scanner for his computer, a projector screen, and a ROM extension pack. He released various updates, and had the computer made in red, black, and traditional blue. The Icecube A2 has received the most downloads for any of his builds, reaching into the thousands. It was a total success.

“Maybe I'll still try working on the A2 and ROMs. I love it to bits.” IcyGamma told me.

MicroBlock was well run for a good time. The server was often filled with freebuilders, people applying, or the MicroBlock team having fun. Though tensions were arising.

Tenshi was claiming to be mistreated by Slicksilver555. He went to Icy for help, but IcyGamma was reluctant to intervene.

“I felt pressured since Slick was giving me the means to host for free.” IcyGamma admits. Tenshi new this and criticized IcyGamma. Though Slick always denied this, and said he would never try to abuse his power or pressure Icy.

IcyGamma did talk about the issue, and even said that he could never fire Slick if he needed to because of the hosting. Slick said he would happily step down if it made things better, and that he would not cut hosting, but its not what IcyGamma wanted. He just wanted to make a point.

Tenshi eventually came to the server less. IcyGamma later gave Slick the title of “server

technician” to clear his position in the clan up.

“What many people don't know is Slick figured out how to make Linux servers appear on the master list in Blockland. And our MicroBlock server was the first Linux server to be flawlessly hosted.” IcyGamma explains. This is how Slick got his position title. He would often fix bugs with the server and even created a backup system to keep things going smoothly.

Though one day an argument broke out. IcyGamma and Slick met in the meeting room of the Slate building, where there was a discussion about the future of MicroBlock.

Slick felt the clan needed to expand out, open more slots, and build up a bigger roll of players for power. Where as IcyGamma disagreed, saying it would cheapen MicroBlock, and that sincere events were more important.

“It was an argument that lasted for about half an hour. It was rough. I told him it was my decision, and I wasn't going to do it. In short, no. But I had to say no over and over, he wouldn't take it as an answer.” IcyGamma recalls. IcyGamma soon had to leave and told Slick they'd discuss it another time.

“Slick thought MicroBlock was going to kill itself by staying small. He wanted to loosen the application requirements. I thought he was mad. Totally mad.” IcyGamma said.

In the end, IcyGamma persisted and kept things his way.

Things were fine for a while. The clan and its members had fun hanging around at the server. Until one day, an old friend of IcyGamma's and an ex-MicroBlock member came along. It was SeventhSandwich.

“Seventh wanted to get in without an app. I told him it had been too long and he should make something.” IcyGamma said.

Seventh built an application, but it showed no sense of design, and the events were broken. Seventh blamed VCE for not functioning correctly, and demanded IcyGamma should let him in for his effort.

“I felt awkward, but I said no. It wasn't good enough. He argued a lot, Slick had to calm him down. The guy was a mess. It put me off him. He had changed.” IcyGamma recalls.

Seventh decided to reapply. He built an application from scratch outside, and had left it there unattended. He decided not to save it either, which baffles IcyGamma even today.

One day when IcyGamma visited the headquarters, he went on his usual spam clearing routine.

“I clear things that look ugly, like random bricks or weird eyesores. You get lots of those in freebuilds. Turns out, I accidentally killed his app with the admin wand.” IcyGamma said.

Icy had made some changes to the HQ afterwards, until Seventh came along. He was disgraced IcyGamma had destroyed his app.

“You did it on purpose!” Seventh protested. IcyGamma was shocked. He apologized and tried to explain the situation, but Seventh wouldn't have it. Seventh couldn’t load it without a saved copy, and the server backup would damage the HQ due to structural changes Icy had recently made.

“He said I just didn't want him in. First he insulted me, then he begged I let him in. He was like a crazy person you find on the street; sane one minute then trying to mug you and steal your shoes the next.” IcyGamma laughed.

Seventh argued, getting more personal as he went on. Soon he was insulting IcyGamma, then insulting MicroBlock and its members. IcyGamma was shocked at how rude Seventh was, and told him if his app was mistaken for spam it would have been denied anyway. But Seventh wasn't going to stop there.

He had to eventually be banned because his attitude and behavior got poorer and poorer.

“One minute he'd be telling me MicroBlock sucked, I was an idiot, and that everything we did was stupid. Then the next minute he would be demanding to be let in, telling me he was my friend. It was the most fucked up thing I've ever seen happen in Blockland.” IcyGamma told me.

IcyGamma soon found SeventhSandwich posting terrible things in the MicroBlock topic. He began to hound MicroBlock business.

“I told him going on a personal attack over a misunderstanding had just destroyed his hopes of fixing the situation. The guy is a total nutjob. I sincerely have never been so surprised of somebody’s actions online as I was that day.” IcyGamma said.

The situation was never repaired. IcyGamma had to make his application guidelines more obvious to prevent any issues with what was expected from potential members in the future (SeventhSandwich arguing there was no requirements for design, even though it was visibly listed). Though Seventh would never come to terms with the situation. He would for months continue to post bad things about MicroBlock and IcyGamma, and eventually he would forever criticize eventing clans, taking what IcyGamma describes as “every opportunity to slag event clans off.” IcyGamma says he has never been more bewildered by a player.

IcyGamma eventually criticized Seventh for what he did, and said he had no design or building skill whatsoever, and that he was glad the app system filtered him out of his group. Though he regrets having lost Seventh as a friend.

“Seventh, a guy who I really enjoyed spending time with in v8, turned out to be a childish fruit. One things for sure, I certainly don't want to bump into him on the street. He might try to stab and rape me.” IcyGamma jokes (followed by a sad face “ :(”).

In IcyGamma's eyes, Seventhsandwich was to MicroBlock what Lewnaja was to iBlock. Bad publicity, and cancer to the clan.

“It was only a wee while after that incident that things got rocky with applicants. He fucked up our PR.” IcyGamma explains.

Slicksilver555 was shocked to learn of what happened, but it made him more persistent in pushing IcyGamma to change his approach to new members. Slick even suggested giving him another chance, but IcyGamma wouldn't even humor the suggestion and stormed out.

One day IcyGamma told Slick he was busy with school and had started to do work and deeper study, and that he may randomly disappear for a long period.

“You'll come back and see this server and be all nostalgic.” Slick told IcyGamma, suggesting he'd keep the server up. But he didn't.

Slick pulled the server down less than a week later. He stopped responding to IcyGamma's messages, and broke off contact. MicroBlock wasn't able to continue afterwards, failing to find a new host. IcyGamma had lost his life support.

“I'm very annoyed he did that. He lied. He was a bit of a jerk for being so quick to turn his back.” IcyGamma said.

Though MicroBlock still exists as a brand for BLPC creation, as an organized clan, it won't yet be viable to have it survive until Slick returns.

“I needed Slick. I still do.” IcyGamma admits.

Chapter 21
The Taking of Isar Tower

IcyGamma had always wanted to make a story about GammerMunchy and the stolen Isar Tower, which became a bit of a drama trip on the Blockland forums.

He began writing a script in 2010 but abandoned it. Now it was mid to late 2011, and Icy was interested in working on it again. By this time, he had trashed his channel's videos, but was now redesigning it to make it a nice place to display the Isar series.

IcyGamma wrote the script backwards. He kept the story in his head, picturing crucial scenes and linking them up as he went along.

Icy wanted to create a series that was memorable. He wanted it to be a polished three-parter, with brilliant editing, a great script, great acting, and of course, a realistic undertone.

“I wanted people to be excited about the show. Make them wait in anticipation for the next weeks installment.” IcyGamma explained.

He ended up doing some of the voicing himself, with most of the lines going to the player Kyzor who IcyGamma had great respect for after the project.

“Kyzor was fast, polite, and he did a great job. Highly recommended. He's one of my favorite Blockland players for sure.” IcyGamma said.

Other voice actors included Audax, DrPepper, Daffy, and even TomTheGeek.

“Daffy was the worst.” IcyGamma said frankly.

“He was a last minute rush. I made the mistake of crediting him before I got the files as he was doing episode 2. He bombed.” IcyGamma explained.

The series was filmed in the real Isar Tower, though IcyGamma often destroyed any parts of the building he wasn't filming in to stop actors trying to save it. He claims one of his actors tried.

Many random Blocklander’s did the “physical acting” as Icy put it. His voice actors would never see the movie, the characters, or the scene until it was released. They would never film in-game. Icy would use random other players for each of the scenes to make it easier. It also gave him an excuse to say to those who begged to be in the movie; “... okay, just be there at the right place at the right time,”. He knew very well that his time zone was not in sync with theirs.

IcyGamma finished episode one but was planning to finish all three before releasing it.

Though after talking with Kyzor, he changed his mind. This would be a mistake. IcyGamma managed to meet the deadline for episode 2, but not episode 3.

“We fell behind by over a month.” IcyGamma laughs. By episode 3, voice actors were getting tired, IcyGamma was becoming sick of the project, and above all everyone seemed to catch a cold or get ill in the same week. But eventually, episode three did get finished.

The series received almost entirely positive response. It was arguably IcyGamma's best video work, and the story was praised by many. This would be IcyGamma's most successful project as far as community response was concerned.

There was drama during the production however. At one point, IcyGamma became sick of working with Custard who was distracted during an urgent scene one evening.

“He went AFK just before I said action. I was so fucking annoyed, I just shut the server down and told him to fuck off.” IcyGamma said. He was in a terrible mood. Even though Custard filmed in episode one and two, he would not be consulted ever again by IcyGamma.

“He was a great actor, but as a person he was irritating and stupid. He believes he is wise and preaches total nonsense.” IcyGamma raged. He had issues with him in the past.

“He once banned me from his server (wayyy before I asked him to act for me) because I was turning a JVS light switch on in somebody's house to tease someone. He said I was being 'too negative' intentionally quoting Eksi after I told him about that situation.” IcyGamma claims.

“After the ordeal, I had two people IRC me asking why Custard was being so angry and weird. I think he broke down a bit.” IcyGamma said. Since then, neither of them have been very nice to each other. IcyGamma says Custard often “post whores” him since the disputes.

“Twits will be twits, eh? I have nothing else to say about him, moving on please.” IcyGamma told me during a Steam conversation, refusing to speak further about him.

Kyzor gave an interview about working on the series of The Taking of Isar Tower for a special “behind the scenes” episode, though Icy never got the support of other actors to finish it. In it, Kyzor outlined how he enjoyed working on the series and would definitely work with Icy again.

IcyGamma indeed tried to launch a comedy series, and even attempted to re-create the IcyGamma clones in a new and unique way, using Kyzor as a voice actor and contributor. However he failed twice.

“After the Taking of Isar Tower, I felt like I'd finished.

“I was erratic, trying to make new shows suddenly, in a weird burst of motivation. I fucked

people around and never finished any new ideas. I feel bad about it.” IcyGamma said.

This would end up being IcyGamma's last video project. His intentions for working on any movies again are slim. His motivation for working on other projects was now also mostly gone, though Icy will always be an eventer and will always be working on something with his trusty wrench.

“I had my time in the spotlight with videos. I've made two feature movies, seventy shorts, and a three-part miniseries that totaled about 40 minutes of viewing time. I've made literally hours of Blockland video. I'm done.” IcyGamma told me.

Chapter 22
The End

In my time working with IcyGamma, I found I got to know him well enough. I read his history, I listened to him, I researched into his work, and I really got a sense of who he is.

Icy is a confident, self-motivated person, who believes in his ideas. He is creative, and sticks to his guns. He is opinionated and honest, perhaps to the point it can be offensive. He can be pompous, condescending, rude, and aggressive. He can look down on people. He is critical, a pessimist. He has an ego that sometimes emerges, but one that stems from self-confidence in his ideas, rather than the attention his projects get. He is modest in some respects, and hates being overpraised. He is socially awkward, and he has little interest in making friends, sometimes treating people badly. Yet he sees a more human side to people online than most do. He feels strongly about doing what he believes is right. He is philosophical, logical, and understanding. However he crosses the line, and he can be cruel and self-interested. His strong desire to get his voice out there can be self-destructive, as can his drive to contribute to Blockland through his stream of projects. He can be paranoid and overreact to mundane situations. He can be erratic and can overwhelm himself with too much work too. But yet, when he does something right, his work can be amazing.

“I have ideas. I am bored. I want to learn. Everything I did has not only strengthened my ability to take criticism, but its let me refine my skills in audio editing, video editing, graphic design, programming, etc.

“I add a few things to Blockland and the community to entertain people. All I wanted was for someone to enjoy what I created. And I've done that. Now I hope people can be inspired by my random projects and contribute in their own way.” IcyGamma said.

Whether you hate IcyGamma, like him, or never knew who he was before you found this book, IcyGamma has left his mark on Blockland. He has contributed to eventing, to the world of clans, and to the world of Blockland movies. He has captured our attention through stunts like Winbin, and strange yet amusing projects like The Blockland Bulletin. Some of his work failed miserably, and some of it was completely misguided for an audience of Blockland players. But unlike most people, IcyGamma put a lot of effort creating things that we may have never seen made had he not fixated on getting them done. After all, who else would made a piano with 13,000 god damn events just to save 20 notes of music? Who else would create a news blog with over 100 articles in a game where people build with lego-styled bricks? Who else would almost get his key revoked to support add-on developers get better treatment from RTB?

I asked IcyGamma why he ever bothered to do any of this. What is the point? He put is simply.

“Its the ability to do things without practical reason that makes us human. Some call it creativity. I call it my way of life. Deal with it.”

“There are few people here that have reason to give me dirty looks. The rest of you are just keeping up appearances.”

~ IcyGamma, 2010